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Darn good fun

Maria gets to the point with sewing comeback

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A vue to view

Latest on £12m cinema scheme for town centre

Page 17

Another slip-up

Saddlers fail to hold on for much-needed win

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BLASTS AT PLANT 'LIKE A WAR ZONE'

Report by Laura Blyth

IT SOUNDED like a war zone. That was the reaction from one shocked resident after massive explosions rocked a battery recycling plant following a blaze which broke out in a yard at the Walsall premises.

Up to 50 firefighters were called in to tackle the fire at G&P Battery Limited in Darlaston which broke out in the early hours of Tuesday. Members of the public said the explosions could be heard from five miles away, many saying that the loud blasts and flashes of light woke them up.

Police were called in to close roads in the area for an hour-and-a-half while the fire, involving several tons of batteries, was brought under control at the premises on the Crescent Works Industrial Estate, in Willenhall Road.

The fire service had to use water from a nearby canal to put the flames out. Initial investigations showed the cause of the fire to be accidental. People took to Twitter to post comments about the fire, which broke out at around 1.30am. Nick Evans said: "Fire woke me at 2.00am I thought I was in a war zone."

Taxi driver Mohammed Hussain, aged 39, who lives in nearby Queen Street, said: "It was like something was blowing up, you wouldn't believe the noise."

Managing director, Michael Green, said the fire was believed to have been started by waste battery stock kept in the yard.

Commotion

Mother-of-three Tammy Perry, of nearby Perry Street said: "I first thought there are gun shots going off. You could see batteries flying up into the air and landing on the roof. I kept the windows shut as there was a big plume of smoke.

Kara Brookes, aged 36, was at her home in Perry Street with her husband Christopher at the time. He opened the curtains to see what the commotion was about.

The mother-of-three said: "It looked like bonfire night all over again. It sounded like there was a war."

West Midlands Police spokesman Lee Page said there was no police involvement as initial investigations had found the blaze had been caused accidentally started by the short circuit of one of the batteries.

It comes after a worker at the site had to be taken to hospital and another eight put in isolation after a suspicious acidic substance was found at the factory on November 12. More than 35 firefighters attended the factory after staff experienced breathing difficulties and dry eyes.

Council to continue help with payments

THOUSANDS of residents in Walsall will continue to get help paying their council tax bills after Walsall Council agreed to cover a government shortfall in benefit payouts.

The Government scrapped the national council tax benefit scheme last April but the replacement saw councils given a 10 per cent cut in funding that equated to around £2.8 million in Walsall.

However, council chiefs say they are not proposing to pass on the cut to residents and that the authority will cover the difference.

They had been looking at whether to ask some residents to contribute more to their bills.

But after consultation councillors at the full council meeting held on Monday approved a move to make up all of the shortfall. They backed the plan as part of the budget.

In Walsall more than 35,000 households receive the benefit with an average weekly award of around £15.64 per week.

A report to the council on the issue said: "The council's overall financial outlook is of course highly challenging.

"Latest projections are that there is a gap of £100m for the council to address over the next five years."

Wards shut in virus fears

TWO more wards have now been closed following an outbreak of norovirus at Walsall Manor Hospital.

Ward seven has been shut with the exception of its coronary care unit, which is open to admissions on clinical grounds only. Health chiefs say ward three has also now fully closed and one bay on the swift discharge suite also remains shut.

It comes after ward 12 was closed to admissions, transfers and visitors at the end of last week. There have been three confirmed cases of the illness at the hospital.

● Recruits – Page 3

Firms hit by crimes above 10,000 mark

MORE than 10,000 crimes have been recorded at Black Country businesses in the space of eight months, new figures show.

Thefts and burglaries are among the crimes which have led to a surge in cases reported in areas including Walsall.

And there has been a spate of raids on shops in the Black Country in recent months. Co-op stores in Wolverhampton, Willenhall and Tividale have all been targeted along with a Spar shop in Lanesfield in Wolverhampton. To crack down on the problem police have handed out crime prevention packs which include special DNA sprays that cover criminals in a solution that remains on them for weeks.

The new figures show there have been 10,169 business crimes reported in the Black Country since April 2013, an increase of 10 compared to the same spell last year.

However Walsall saw more significant rises, with 2,668 crimes reported – up from 2,516 the previous year.

The crime prevention packs being handed out to convenience stores and petrol stations are being funded through a £5,000 cash injection from money seized by criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Acts.

Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands Bob Jones, added: "Seizing back the proceeds of crime means that criminals are not able to benefit from the goods and money they have taken."

Just the ticket for bookworm babies

Amanda Benbow, with baby Matthew and son William, and Angela Dixon, with Casper

BABIES are being automatically signed up as library members as soon as they are born, under a scheme in Walsall.

The newborns in the borough will receive their own library card which will enable their parents to take out books for them and find out about baby and pre-school sessions.

It is part of the Tell Us Once system which shares information across central and local government organisations, with customer's consent, saving the need to contact each one individually.

A library card is sent to the person who registered the child's birth with a specially worded welcome letter, explaining what the card is and how to use it. Families also receive information about library baby and pre-school sessions.

Amanda Benbow, aged 28, from Willenhall, has registered her five-week-old son Matthew to become a member of Willenhall Library. She said: "I registered my older son William with a library card when he was a baby too. It's great because not only can you start taking out baby books and reading to them at a really young age, but you also get to find out about all the clubs and activities."

For more information on the Tell Us Once scheme, call 0845 111 2847.

HomeServe chiefs say they must find £30m

HOME repairs giant HomeServe said it would need to find another £30 million to cover the cost of a huge fine over alleged mis-selling and poor complaints handling.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has told the Walsall business it faces a fine of £34.5 million. It comes two years after the crisis first hit the company, leading to more than 700 job losses nationally.

As a result, HomeServe's UK business has lost around one million customers.

The company had been expecting a fine from the FCA, but the latest figure will be a massive shock. HomeServe had only expected it to come to around £6 million and said it would have to increase its provision by £30 million.

It follows a two-year inquiry into sales and marketing issues, complaints handling and the way HomeServe controlled these areas of its business. The problems saw the company, Walsall's biggest private employer, axing around 400 jobs at its Green Lane base, where it now employs around 1,100 people.

HomeServe said it would now be in talks with the FCA over proposed fine and would not be making any further comment while these discussions continued but added that it would not affect its continuing business in the UK.

Political spat is criticised

A TORY parliamentary candidate for Walsall has criticised a House of Commons spat between the Labour MP he is trying to oust and the Deputy Prime Minister.

Douglas Hansen-Luke said an exchange between David Winnick and Nick Clegg, in which the MP for Walsall North was branded 'infantile' by Mr Clegg, was a 'disservice to politics'.

It followed Mr Winnick asking whether 'waging war on the poorest and most vulnerable in our society' was 'what he came into politics for'.

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Trees will make way for burial plots

TREES will be lost to make way for up to 5,000 new burial plots as part of a cemetery expansion, it has emerged. A shortage of space at Willenhall Lawn Cemetery has prompted Walsall Council to look at extending the site to meet demand.

At the current rate of use the site in Bentley Lane will reach full capacity by the end of next year, which would mean burials would have to take place at North Walsall or Streetly cemeteries instead. A feasibility study to expand the Willenhall site is being carried out in a bid to create enough burial space for the next 40 years.

But a report from officers to members of the council's community services and environment scrutiny panel, says that trees and foliage would need to be cleared for such a scheme to go ahead. This would need to be staggered so as to not impact on wildlife. It has not been revealed at this stage how many trees will need to be lost if the scheme goes ahead.

The report to councillors states: "The amount of suitable available burial land within the existing boundary has diminished with usage.

"In order that new adult burials may continue for many future years it is necessary to take steps to develop an adjacent piece of land to the east of the existing cemetery.

"The provision of additional burial plots would require considerable site clearance and loss of well established trees and foliage."

Willenhall Lawn Cemetery opened in 1966 and was extended in the early 1990s. It comes as burial fees have risen by up to 5.5 per cent over the last few years in a bid to rake in much-needed cash.

Yodel hits back at poll after negative feedback

A PARCEL delivery firm with a major base in the Black Country has insisted it remains ahead of its competitors in customer feedback despite being criticised by customers in a poll.

Yodel has questioned the validity of the research carried out by MoneySavingExpert.com which came to light earlier this week.

It was said that 58 per cent of customers who had their goods delivered by Yodel rated their experience as bad, from a survey of 9,000 people. But Sarah Barnes, spokeswoman for the firm which has a main sorting office on the Willenhall-Darlaston border, said: "We are very disappointed by the results of the MoneySavingExpert poll but have serious concerns about its validity.

"MoneySavingExpert's poll is unverified and open to influence by parties with a vested interest in affecting the outcome of the survey. The results are inconsistent with the independent and verified feedback that customers are giving us on TrustPilot, which places Yodel ahead of all its main competitors," she said.

Direct

"All TrustPilot ratings are verified by the customer who has to enter their parcel tracking number. Our primary concern here is that no such verification is required opening the survey up to people who may have never used a particular delivery service or to multiple votes from single users.

"CollectPlus, Yodel's click and collect network, came second from top in the MoneySavingExpert poll yet the collection and delivery service is performed by Yodel and shares a common customer contact centre. This disparity highlights our concern. We have raised this with MoneySavingExpert but have not yet received a response."

Teenager in robberies on children locked up

A 16-YEAR-OLD who robbed other children of their phones while threatening them with a knife has been put behind bars for more than three years.

His co-defendant was sentenced to more than two years in a young offenders institution for his part in the park robberies, at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Mr David Lees prosecuting told a court that the first robbery happened on March 27 last year in Red House Park, Great Barr.

The three victims, all aged 13, were walking through the park at around 4.30pm, when they noticed the 16 and 17-year-old defendants who ran towards them.

On April 5 the two teenagers struck again. Mr Lees said this time the 17-year-old became involved.

Police tracked down the two teenagers, and at first they denied the offence, but in court they pleaded guilty to three counts of robbery and three counts of attempted robbery. The 16-year-old also pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of an offensive weapon.

The 16-year-old was sentenced to a young offenders institution for three years and eight months and the 17-year-old for two years 10 months.

Getting to the panto Essentials

Essential Production members with, from left to right, narrator Bryce Bealey, aged 16, with Ugly Aunties Nathan Barry and Sarah Campbell preparing for the latest show

THERE will be fun and laughter galore when a homegrown theatre company stages a new pantomime. Essential Productions will put on three performances of Snow White and the Magic Mirror over two days.

Written by Alex Rigby-Bishop, aged 25, and his dad Mark, aged 41, the slapstick production will feature a moving mirror, a cast of 17 players – and even a stuffed snake. The troupe has already taken the show on a dry run to small venues to promote it. It will be staged at Bloxwich Bookmark, Elmore Row, Bloxwich. Alex, a former St Thomas More RC School pupil, said "We've been rehearsing since September. We're very pleased with the result and got a good reception while on tour."

Essential Productions, a registered charity, is based in the Victoria Buildings, Stringes Lane, Willenhall, was set up 16 years ago and stages shows, drama workshops and educational projects. The show will be staged on Friday and Saturday at 7.30pm both days. A matinee performance will also be held on Saturday at 2.30pm.

Ticket prices vary. The cost for children will be between £5 and £6.50 and adults £6.50 and £8.50 depending on the show being attended. Call 01922 637959 or visit **www.yetga.co.uk**

Doorman for strip club had cocaine

A STRIP club doorman caught with cocaine while on the job has been fined. Michal Mickiewicz was caught with a £35 bag of the class A drug when officers raided Angels gentlemen's club on West Bromwich High Street, a court heard.

The Polish national, aged 31 and of Poppy Drive in Walsall, who was working on the door on December 6, claimed the drug was for personal use.

At a hearing at Sandwell Magistrates' Court on Thursday, prosecuting solicitor Mrs Maxine Jarousse-Jones said: "On the evening in question this defendant has been found to be in possession of a small amount of cocaine. Officers attended to execute a warrant. When they went through the front door this defendant was one of three males they encountered. Officers recovered from his front trouser pocket one small grip-sealed bag containing white powder."

In interview under arrest Mickiewicz confirmed it was cocaine, and told officers it was worth £35 and was for personal use.

Defending solicitor Mr Wykeham Garsia said Mickiewicz could now lose his security licence. He said: "This is something of a tragedy for this man, because as a result of his being arrested and charged he was suspended from his job."

The court was also told that Mickiewicz had no previous convictions or cautions recorded in this country. He pleaded guilty to one charge of possessing a class A drug. Magistrates fined him £110, and ordered him to pay £85 towards the cost of the case and a £20 victim surcharge.

Chiefs throw out pub bid

FRESH plans to transform an empty pub into homes have been rejected by council chiefs amid concerns it is within an industrial area.

The British Oak in Walsall has been standing empty after being put on the market more than two-and-a-half years ago and previous proposals to turn it into student accommodation were turned down.

A new application for the John Street site, including two apartments and a bedsit has now also been turned down.

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Recruits move as births on increase

UP to 40 extra staff have been recruited to deal with a rising number of births at Walsall Manor Hospital.

The number of babies being born within the maternity services department has increased from around 3,500 a year to almost 5,000.

Now bosses have revealed they have drafted in more doctors, midwives and support staff in a bid to cope with demand. They say they anticipate the numbers of mums-to-be will continue to rise with up to 500 extra a year coming from Staffordshire following the shake-up of health services.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust insists it needs funding for an overall £14m upgrade of the Manor, some of which would be used to expand maternity services. Although the hospital is currently able to cope despite the huge surge in demand, officials say they will struggle to deal with the hundreds of extra patients expected from Staffordshire over the coming years if they cannot expand.

Chief executive Richard Kirby said: "If we are going to see activity carry on increasing then we will need more physical space and that is the argument we made to the Mid-Staffordshire administrators and they agreed with us. It is really important we get the resource we asked for."

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt will have the final say on the recommendations in February.

Group will mark 20th

AN ORGANISATION providing support and services for adults with learning disabilities to help them live independently will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year.

Bethphage, which has offices in Lichfield Street, Walsall, launched in 1994 when Nebraskan-based Bethphage USA successfully tendered for work with Shropshire Council.

It established itself as a charity and now employs 230 staff, supporting nearly 80 people across five local authority areas.

Rob Tovey, CEO at Bethphage, said: "The most exciting change has been the rise in expectations of people with learning disabilities"

Birdwatchers in a flap over rare sighting

The glossy ibis wading bird

SIGHTINGS of a species rarely seen in the UK has ruffled the feathers of birdwatchers in Walsall.

A glossy ibis, which is a dark-coloured wading bird with a distinctive long down-curved bill, is not usually seen in Britain and was last sighted in the West Midlands in Wolverhampton during 1929.

But the bird was more recently spotted near Engine Lane, Brownhills, earlier this week. The bird, which breeds in the warm regions of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Atlantic and Caribbean, was also spotted in Goscote Valley in December.

Kevin Clements, Walsall Council's countryside services manager, said the bird was first spotted in the area just before Christmas. He added: "It was found in Goscote Valley on December 17 and was seen daily until December 22, and was reported as being seen in that area again on December 26."

He said it reappeared in Brownhills last week, adding: "Glossy ibis is the most widespread ibis species, breeding in warm regions of many parts of the world. It doesn't breed in Britain, but apparently some birds from Spain winter here. They feed in shallow water and wet grassland.

"It is extremely rare to find a bird of this type in Britain and this is only the second recorded spotting in the West Midlands, the first being in Wolverhampton in 1929."

George Makin, who has been birdwatching for the past seven years, found out about the recent sightings on Twitter. Mr Makin, from The Butts in Walsall, said: "This bird is about 4,000 miles off-course. It's suppose to be somewhere in the Middle East right now. That's where they go in the winter. How it got Brownhills confused with the Red Sea is a little difficult to understand."

Glossy Ibis like marshes at the edges of lakes and rivers but can also be found at lagoons, floodplains, wet meadows, swamps, reservoirs, sewage ponds, paddies and irrigated farmland.

£21,000 claimed by woman who went to keep fit classes

SHE TOLD officials she needed help to walk and to get dressed when signing up for disability benefits – but Anne Bird was caught in the act taking part in energetic exercise classes after falsely claiming £21,000.

Bending over exercise balls and stretching out her limbs, Anne Bird was covertly filmed during her sessions.

A court heard she participated in a range of physical activities including circuit training and pilates at Bloxwich Leisure Centre before her deception came to light.

An investigation was launched by the Department for Work and Pensions following a tip-off that she was joining in exercise sessions at the centre, in High Street, in 2008. Investigators set up a surveillance operation.

The 60-year-old had been a Royal Mail delivery worker, but was laid off in 2008 due to health problems.

Pilates

Miss Maggie Meakin, prosecuting, told Walsall Magistrates Court that the defendant was overpaid by a total of £21,109 after making false declarations on claim forms. "It was confirmed by a doctor that she has osteoarthritis and that she needs help to bathe and dress, and needed help to walk," she said.

"She then applied for the higher rate of disability living allowance claiming at this point that she needed help as she had problems with her knees and hips.

"The department was made aware that from October 2006 to August 2012 she was attending Bloxwich Leisure Centre and was participating in group exercise including pilates and circuit training."

Bird, of Darlaston Road, Pleck, suffers from osteoarthritis in her legs and rheumatoid arthritis in her hands. She was entitled to some benefits, but not the full amount she received.

Anne Bird exercising

She had previously denied two counts of dishonestly making a false statement to obtain a benefit, but changed to guilty pleas ahead of the matter going to trial.

In sentencing her last Wednesday magistrates jailed her for 12 weeks suspended for 12 months and handed her a six-month supervision order with probation. She was also ordered to pay £300 costs and victims' surcharge £80.

Mr Lee Preston, defending, said she had already repaid the money.

Trio gear up for 350-mile bike challenge

Harvey Uppal, of Willenhall, left, with Junaid Parvez, of Stourbridge, and Kulvir Panesar, of Solihull, ready for their trip

THREE friends will be getting in the saddle for a charity bike ride from London to Paris.

Retail supervisor Harvey Uppal, aged 23, of Willenhall, and his friends Kully Panesar, 23 and Junaid Parvez, 24, are in training for the 350-mile trip.

They have already raised more than £1,000 for the charity Action Against Hunger which promotes projects to end child hunger and helps to improve access to clean water. They will be among a group of 50 cyclists taking part in the expedition organised by the charity as part of fundraising efforts.

The group will set off from Upper Norwood in south London in March before catching a ferry to Calais then on to Paris.

Mr Uppal, of Knights Close, said: "We were looking for something meaningful to do to help a good cause. After checking out a list of charities we decided on Action against Hunger as we don't believe children should be going to bed on an empty stomach.

"We also wanted to raise the profile of this issue. We've raised about £1,000 already. "We're training at the moment. We've been going out on the roads in preparation for the ride which will cover 350 miles over four days and working out."

All three are recent university graduates. Mr Uppal attended the former Albion Road Junior School, in Willenhall, and Queen Mary's Grammar School, in Walsall, and is hoping to carve out a career in retail management.

Action against Hunger is an international leader in the fight against malnutrition. To sponsor go to **www.justgiving.com/actionforhungerbikeride**

NEWS in brief

Pets store sees 500 applications

MORE than 500 job hopefuls applied for just seven new posts at a £500,000 store opening at a retail park, bosses have revealed.

Pets at Home is taking over the former Dreams unit at Reedswood Retail Park in Walsall with doors due to open next month.

The pet supplies retailer is fitting out the 8,922sq ft store ahead of the launch on February 21 and more than 520 applications were received for the seven jobs. The figures lay bare the scale of unemployment in the region.

Despite latest data from the Office for National Statistics showing job queues were shrinking, there were still 240,000 out of work in the three months to October.

In Walsall there were 8,120 claiming jobseeker's allowance with 129,248 across the whole of the West Midlands.

Academy pupils raise thousands

GENEROUS pupils at a secondary academy used their talents to raise thousands of pounds for a variety of good causes.

The student body at Walsall Academy wore denims to school for a day to raise £947 on Jeans for Genes charity. While non-uniform days for various charities raised £1,067.

They collected £766 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, and sixth formers organised a fashion show to raise £700 for the Newlife Foundation.

Fundraising activities made £1,015 for Birmingham Children's Hospital's cancer centre appeal. Male staff at the school in Lichfield Road, Bloxwich, grew moustaches to collect £341 for the Movember appeal and PE students held a charity netball match to raise £216 for Sport Relief.

Stress issues are brought to fore

STUDENTS behind Walsall College Radio completed a successful work experience project with two mental health nurses to raise awareness about issues surrounding stress.

The creative media production students and radio production lecturer Lyndon Bayliss worked with two nurses from Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust to create a10-minute feature interview, which explored various concerns, including what can trigger different types of stress.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I WROTE a few days ago about how the free movement of Labour within the EU has stripped some regions of their population. A reader writes: "It's January 9 and I have not seen a Bulgarian yet. To be fair, I've only been in Bulgaria for three days."

UP in the attic I found a 1997 copy of Punch. It recorded the 10th anniversary of the death of Liberace and explained how, by legal threats, pay-offs and the sheer power of his celebrity status, the star managed to keep his sexual preferences a secret for years. Couldn't possibly happen now, could it?

UNTIL I saw Nick Robinson's programme, modestly entitled The Truth About Immigration, (BBC2) I thought it would be impossible to make a 60-minute documentary addressing people's concerns without once mentioning jihad, sharia courts, forced marriage, electoral fraud, urban overcrowding, road safety, women in veils, genital mutilation, gangmaster slavery, the rise of TB, pickpockets, aggressive begging or terrorist plots. Robinson managed to treat mass migration purely as an economic issue. His conclusion? Basically, everything's fine. Another triumph for Auntie Beeb.

FROM a long, long list of internet gags about England's dismal drubbing in the Ashes, I had to smile at this: What do you get if you cross the English cricket team with an Oxo cube? A laughing stock.

IT IS alleged that ministers and officials had more than 100 meetings with the drinks industry before deciding not to impose alcohol price controls. So what's new? The relationship between the drinks industry and Parliament is a long and jolly one which, over the years has given us the great national gifts of cheap booze, 24-hour drinking and super-strength lager. But of course all vested interests use alcohol in the process of lobbying. In the good old days some honourable members were so well lobbied that they slid off the benches in the Commons after lunch. Absolutely lobbied.

HOW the economy works. The wicked finance industry mis-sells payment-protection insurance to millions of customers. The customers later receive compensation. They use this compensation for the deposits on new cars (sales are now at the highest level for six years). They borrow the rest of the money to buy the cars. Their repayments provide a glorious bonanza for – the wicked finance industry.

BENEFITS Street (C4) was a depressing study of the shoplifting, drug-addicted underclass in one of the scrattier ends of Birmingham. It was peppered with foul language but in this sad little community, only one four-letter word has the power to shock. One resident was visibly rocked at the news that he was being lined up for a work programme. "Work?" he said in disgust. "I've never worked in me life."

YOU could not fail to be impressed by the home-delivery service in Benefits Street. It is faster than John Lewis, simpler than eBay, more user-friendly than PayPal. I refer, of course, to the drugs deliveries. Just pick up the phone and your stash arrives at your door within minutes. Idiotic politicians still talk fiercely about "the war on drugs." The truth is they put up the white flag and surrendered years ago.

BENEFITS Street now stands accused of giving viewers tips on shoplifting. And why not? Thieving from shops has been virtually decriminalised. It is "punished" with a fixed-penalty ticket which puts it on a par with not wearing your seat belt. No wonder so many Brits regard shoplifting as a career choice. I was once shown the perfect way to steal from shelves by a manager at a branch of Woolworths who was helping me with a feature on shoplifting. It was a very neat, undetectable move which I would share were it not for the threat of a bored copper reading me a caution.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Supply staff vital for pupils' learning

THE USE of supply teachers is necessary to ensure pupils' learning is not affected, it has been insisted.

More than £500,000 was spent by maintained schools in Walsall within three months since the start of the term, latest figures revealed.

The outlay on agency staff was made by schools and nurseries in between September and November last year to cover the likes of sickness absence and maternity cover.

Rose Collinson, interim executive director for children's services at Walsall Council, said: "Schools and their governing bodies are committed to making sure every lesson counts for every child.

"They decide when to use supply cover– which can be necessary for periods of sickness absence, maternity/paternity cover, training and development opportunities for example – to ensure pupils' learning and achievement is not adversely affected."

It comes after an overhaul of the education system in Walsall which saw the council terminate its £345 million contract with private firm Serco, which was running the borough's education services.

The move was announced in 2011 with the authority citing 'major changes to government policy' as the reason for the withdrawal.

The contract came to an end in April and the switch has seen more than 350 education and childcare workers transferred back to the council.

Many schools in Walsall have now become academies, which allows them more financial control.

Reports of anti-social behaviour top 3,500

MORE than 3,500 reports of anti-social behaviour were made in Walsall in the last 12 months, new figures have revealed.

But Walsall Council chiefs insist this is a 16 per cent reduction on the previous year and steps are being taken to tackle the issue. Complaints lodged by residents include worries about rowdy youths, fighting, noise and fly-tipping.

In a report to the Full Council which met on Monday, councillor Zahid Ali, portfolio holder for public health and protection, said officials were doing what they can to crack down on the problem.

And he added a new pilot scheme is being launched which will see the council work with other agencies to jointly tackle the problem.

He said: "The last 12 months has seen 3,609 incidents of anti social behaviour – a reduction of nearly 16 per cent.

Reduction

"But anti-social behaviour is a major concern for our residents and so we are starting pilot activity between the council, registered social landlords and the police to promote a more co-ordinated approach. "

It emerged recently that police have stepped up patrols after reports of yobs being rowdy and throwing stones at passing vehicles.

The hotspot areas in Blakenall include Harden Road, Well Lane, Chaucer Road, Goldsmith Road and Walker Road.

Officers said they have identified a number of people and are referring them to partnership agencies. They are also being signed up to an anti-social behaviour plan.

There have also been problems with fly-tipping which included almost 400 fridges being dumped in Walsall in just four months - as rogue traders targeted the metal.

Steaming ahead for exhibition

Martin Fisher with a working model of a Foden steam tractor as he prepares for the event

MODEL vehicles, trains and railway layouts will form part of an exhibition at an historic transport museum in the spring.

A Foden steam tractor is currently on display at Aston Manor Road Transport Museum, in Shenstone Drive, Aldridge, to advertise the event taking place on April 6.

It has been loaned to the museum by Barry Kefford, of Sutton Coldfield. Model enthusiasts are also being encouraged to get in touch with the museum if they want to have their own display at the event, which will run from 10.30am to 4pm.

Volunteers have also been sprucing up the museum, which has a collection of buses and commercial vehicles dating back decades, and a street scene is now being created.

The museum's collection includes a tram from the 1920s, a van from around 1928 and a taxi from the 1970s, along with an old Royal Mail bicycle, bus stops and an old fuel pump.

The museum managed to secure a lease for the Shenstone Drive base in 2012 before getting planning permission for a permanent conversion.

Admission to the event in April costs £5 for adults and £3 for children.

Student in birthday night out aggression

A BUSINESS student spat at a police officer and slapped a doorman in the face after she was thrown out of a Walsall nightclub for bad behaviour.

Victoria Grant, 22, was celebrating her birthday at WS1 nightclub on December 13 when she was ejected by the staff at about 3am.

Miss Maggie Meakin, prosecuting told Walsall Magistrates court Grant then struck the bouncer in the face. She added: "A police officer tried to intervene. When she was put in handcuffs she was aggressive, she spat at the officer.

"She remembers going to WS1 and having champagne, but the rest of the night is a blur," said Mr Ian Henery, defending. Grant, of Gypsy Lane, Willenhall, admitted being drunk and disorderly, assaulting a police officer and common assault.

The university student was given a six-month community order with probation and ordered to pay £350 compensation to the officer and £100 to the doorman, along with paying a victims' surcharge of £60 and legal costs of £85.

£500k is spent on tackling gridlock

A TOTAl of more than £500,000 has been spent on improving traffic flow along some of Walsall's busiest roads as part of a carbon busting project.

Transport authority Centro teamed up with Walsall Council to identify key congested routes in the borough and a package of improvements were introduced to speed up journey times, improve bus reliability and cut congestion. Changes made over the last year include improving traffic junctions, crossings to improve walking access to local facilities and installing 'intelligent' traffic signals.

The number four bus route connecting Walsall to the shopping and employment centres of West Bromwich, Blackheath and Brierley Hill is just one of the routes that has benefited. Other changes have been made along well used roads linking Walsall to Darlaston and Wednesbury.

Walsall's regeneration and transport chief, Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "These measures will improve access to other key Black Country centres for Walsall residents." Visit **www.mynetwork.org.uk** for details.

Fall in value of town earnings

THE real value of average earnings has fallen by almost 14 per cent in the UK since the recession five years ago – but Walsall has seen an above average fall, a new study has shown.

The figure in Walsall stands at 20 per cent the GMB union report has revealed. Paul Kenny, general secretary said: "These alarming figures show how hard-pressed working people across the UK are struggling to pay their bills after years of wage decline."

MP hopeful in marathon task

HE PLANS to run the race to be elected as an MP but first Douglas Hansen-Luke is taking on a different race. The Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Walsall North plans to run the London Marathon.

Mr Hansen-Luke said he would be supporting West Midlands charity St Giles Hospice and Learning for Life.

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Gripes over services as training hit

MORE than 100 complaints have been made about Walsall Council services in a year, new figures reveal – but training on handling them has been cancelled due to staff shortages.

The authority received 123 complaints within 12 months in 2012/13, which was down from 146 the previous financial year.

The majority of complaints were made about services or problems with communication.

Bosses say a training course had been introduced to improve the way complaints are hand-led – but it could not go ahead due to a lack of staff available.

But they insist all complaints are taken seriously.

A report by Heather Maybury, principal customer liaison officer, states: "A number of training sessions have been planned in order to inform staff on how to handle and respond to complaints."

Of the complaints made, 45 were not upheld, 31 were partly upheld, 30 were upheld and the rest were either classed as 'inconclusive' or withdrawn.

Hundreds in applications

MORE than 250 workers have applied for voluntary redundancy at Walsall Council – and, as of last week, 99 have been accepted.

The number of applications at Walsall Council is more than two thirds of the 332 jobs that are set to be cut in total as part of a bid to save £19 million.

The council started looking for candidates for voluntary redundancy in August – and since then 251 staff have expressed an interest. There have been 450 redundancies in the past four years.

Lifestyle choice advice on way

PEOPLE can shed the pounds during a new year weight loss programme.

The 12-week Evolve sessions will run at Bloxwich Leisure Centre on Mondays and Thursdays from February, focusing on healthy lifestyle changes.

It costs £40 for 12 weeks or £3.50 per session. Men with a Body Mass Index over 30 can attend for free due to funding from Public Health Walsall.

For further information call sport and leisure on 01922 658080.

Wind of change is signal for repair work

Oliver Budd from CJ Roofing Services restores and repairs the 1807 signal box at Burntwood Station

A HISTORIC railway signal box has come in for a little TLC after being damaged in the recent high winds.

Original roof slates from the late Victorian structure at Chasewater Light Railway, near Burntwood, had been blown off in the stormy weather.

Now the signal box has been given an overhaul to return it to its former glory.

Six people in all had worked on the revamp, which also saw vandalised windows replaced and a refurbished coal fire stove installed.

Mark Sealey, the railway's general manager, said it was a labour of love. "It can be a bit of a nightmare at times, it's what we have to do," he said.

"With the damage to the roof we took the opportunity to upgrade the signal box generally."

Rescued

He said local tradesmen had been given the work with new tiles laid by CJ Roofing Services of Lichfield, the lead flashing replaced by the Lead Mill in Norton Canes and the stove being originally built by former Cannock factory Jellyman's. The signal box, formerly at Hademore, near Tamworth, is one of three boxes that have been rescued from Network Rail and rebuilt at the site.

Also at Chasewater are the Brereton Sidings signal box that was saved from Rugeley and another from Madeley Junction, near Crewe.

The Tamworth signal box, which was donated with its levers missing, had been kitted out with a set of 15 levers acquired from a North Western Railway signal box at Hednesford.

Schools expansion plan for 180 extra reception places

PRIMARY schools across Walsall could be expanded to find around 180 extra reception places by 2017, council bosses have said.

Figures show there were 3,542 reception children on roll in the borough in October last year, but education bosses predict the number will rise to 3,723 by 2016/17.

There have been 'significant' pressures in Short Heath, where limited space is available, and there were no spare places in September last year at schools in the Walsall Wood and Aldridge areas, according to a new report.

It said parents had faced difficulties seeking mid-year admissions to schools in these areas. By April last year, 3,460 applications for placements had been submitted for children living in Walsall, with 89 per cent being offered their first preference.

There were 178 applicants who were given their second preference and 43 were offered their third preference. A total of 145 children were not offered a place at their parents preferred schools but were offered a place at a school within two miles of their home.

The report said there were sufficient places available for September 2014 but additional reception places will be needed for the following year. It states that a total of 90 additional places have been created at Birchills CE Community Academy, King Charles Primary, Hillary Primary and Caldmore Village Primary since 2010.

The report, which went before the young people scrutiny and performance panel on Tuesday said: "It is proposed that all additional provision that is required will be created through the expansion of existing primary schools located within each of the planning areas."

Food firm staff pitch in to help community

STAFF from a food distribution firm have been pitching in to help a community garden thrive.

The group from AF Blakemore's Axcess 10 Warehouse in Darlaston carried out a host of tasks at Darlaston Community Garden in Victoria Road, as part of its volunteering programme.

They spent a week at the site and decorated a temporary building, created new pathways to the shed and a new hard standing area. They also installed water butts and carried out general gardening tasks.

The site, which is also an allotment for more than 40 people, is home to the blossoming community garden after volunteers formed a group, supported by Walsall Council's Clean and Green Services. Adam Ball, team leader at AF Blakemore, said: "We heard about this project via the council's website and thought it would be the ideal initiative to be involved in.

Councillor Anthony Harris, Walsall Council's leisure and culture chief, said: "This is a super gesture by one of the borough's best-known employers."

Sew much to learn thanks to Maria

Maria Breslin, with her sewing machine, who is running sewing tuition classes, as the skill is making a comeback

IT WAS not so much a pastime but a necessity in bygone eras and now the skill of sewing is on a comeback.

Boosted in popularity with the likes of TV show Great British Sewing Bee, one sewing tutor is reporting a spike in interest in the intricate craft.

Maria Breslin, aged 53, runs tuition courses above DC Nutt Sewing Machines in Park Road in Bloxwich which has been trading in the town for 21 years.

The mother of two started her business around five years ago but says the past 18 months have seen an incredible increase in interest. She said: "It is going through a revival. There are a lot of people who maybe have just taken retirement and want something a bit different to do.

"They are typically women who want to be able to make their own clothes for special occasions but you also get men who want to be able to produce things like golf shirts."

As well as tuition on how to use a sewing machine, Mrs Breslin, who lives in Shenstone near Lichfield, also teaches pattern design, fitting, and how to use computer software for embroidery. She teaches small classes and has pupils from 14 to 80. "You see a lot of people want to take up cooking after watching it on TV and I think the same is happening with sewing."

Mrs Breslin, who took up sewing aged just nine when given scraps of fabric to play with by her mother, said that some people wanted to create their own clothes to stand out and for a better fit.

NEWS in brief

Park on the path to improvement

IMPROVEMENTS are being made to pathways and resurfacing work is taking place at the play area at a park in Brownhills.

The improvements at Holland Park are being funded by Walsall Council's clean and green services and carried out by JP Landscapes.

A metal shelter in the park extension is also being removed and new benches and bins added.

Resurfacing work is also taking place on a section of the drive from the Park View Centre to the main entrance to the park, including the area currently used for car parking.

It is due to be completed by the end of February, weather permitting.

Musical youth worker CD bid

A YOUTH worker with a passion for music has joined forces with a poet for a new CD to raise money for the Mayor of Walsall's charity appeal.

When the town's poet laureate Ian Henery asked Darlaston based senior youth worker Roy Smith for help in cutting a CD for a good cause, he jumped at the chance.

Poetry to Music features a selection of music styles, including pop and reggae. It was recorded at Progress Music Academy in Birmingham. CDs cost £5 and are available on 07783 166218. Proceeds will go to charities including Acorns Children's Hospice.

Resources bid on new course

A NEW human resources qualification will be launched at Walsall College next month.

The new higher apprenticeship in human resource management will be introduced. It incorporates a level five qualification, which is the equivalent level to a second year of university.

The course provides the apprentice with the practical experience of working in an HR environment and is backed by the Skills CFA and Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development.

Fuschia meet

WALSALL Fuchsia and Flower Society will hold its first meeting of the new year on January 20. The group meets at Walsall Labour Club, in Church Road, Pelsall, at 7.30pm.

Advertisement Feature

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW WITH MARK ANDREWS

IMPROVE: make or become better (Oxford English Dictionary).

I only quote this definition because 128,000 households across Dudley are being promised an 'improved' waste collection service over the coming weeks.

Speaking as one of the lucky few who has already benefited from this 'improved' service for a number of months, I can give you a sneak preview of what lies in store.

The boring, old-fashioned service, where the binmen used to collect your bags once a week, will be replaced with an exciting new one where you have to sort your waste into five different containers: a blue bag for paper, a green bag for plastic milk bottles and cans, a giant green bin for grass cuttings, glass bottles in a black box, and a wheelie bin for general waste.

Oh and you will have to pay for your own bin bags from now on, as well, assuming you don't want your wheelie bin to smell like a Victorian cesspit. Bet you can't wait now, can you?

Of course, it is all too easy to have a pop at local councils, which are caught in the middle of a perfect storm between ridiculous EU recycling directives, extortionate landfill taxes, and budget cuts. The councils are between a rock and a hard place, and we should sympathise with their predicament.

But please, please, don't try to spin this as some kind of improvement.

❒❒❒❒❒

SOME people's belief that the internet is the panacea for all problems knows no bounds.

Take Stephen McLaughlin, for example. He is the father-to-be who thought it would be a good idea to turn the impending birth of his daughter into some kind of online reality show, where followers of his website - NameMyDaughter.com - will decide on what she is called.

It probably comes as little surprise that

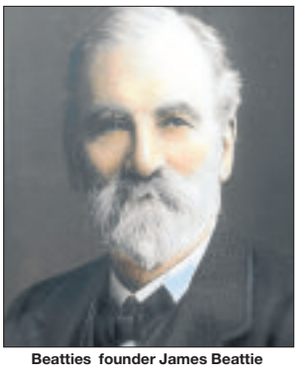
Suggestions to date have included Cthulhu, Laquisha, Megatron and Slagathor, with Pond, Salad and Titanium cited as possible second names.

At the moment it looks like the child will be called Amelia All-Spark when she arrives in this world on April 2, so it could have been worse - although I'm torn about whether this sounds more like a failed 1970s disco group or a new brand of environmentally-friendly van.

And think that 20 years down the line, this poor lass is going to be filling out job application forms saddled with this stupid moniker just because her dad thought it would be cool and fun.

Still, perhaps she should be grateful she isn't going to be called System Error. That's what usually comes up on my computer.

Cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the Beatties store extension in Victoria Street, Wolverhampton



Beatties founder James Beattie

We felt like part of the Beatties family

The history of the city's most iconic and successful businesses is being laid bare as **WILL ACKERMANN** explains

"WOLVERHAMPTON is Beatties and Beatties is Wolverhampton."

It is one of the city's most iconic and successful businesses – and now the history of Beatties is being laid bare like never before.

The landmark department store has handed over hundreds of old photographs and documents to the Wolverhampton City Archives, where a selection are going on display.

The exhibition, titled A Better Place to Shop: The Story of Beatties, includes sales catalogues dating back as far as the 1890s, as well as archived newspaper advertisements, photographs and menus from celebration dinners.

Demolished

Each item in the treasure trove of documents and artefacts is accompanied by an explanatory note, outlining its place in the company's 136-year history.

Organiser Karen Davies, the City Archives' cataloguing archivist, who worked at the store as a sales consultant for five years until 2000, said: "If you ask anyone living in Wolverhampton and beyond, everyone knows Beatties.

"When I worked there people used to say they only came to Wolverhampton to shop at Beatties. It was like the Harrods of Wolverhampton. The purpose of this exhibition is to make the public aware just how important Beatties was to the retail history of the city."

The company was founded in Victoria Street by local draper and businessman James Beattie. It opened in 1877, when it was called the Victoria Draper Supply Store. By 1895, the firm employed 40 members of staff and was enjoying an annual turnover of £30,000.

Grand entrance – the extended frontage of the store in the 1930s

Glamour by Dolores advert in the 1950s

Sales brochure from 1960s

But fortunes took a turn for the worse when, only a year later, a huge fire forced it to be demolished and rebuilt.

The blaze also destroyed much of the store's stock. What remained had to be sold to buy more items to refill the shelves. Fortunately, the owners recovered from the potentially devastating incident, and by the turn of the century they were back on their feet.

But then, in 1912, a second fire struck, prompting another rebuild, which included changing the shop facade for the first time since the store had first opened 35 years earlier.

An extension was then built leading out into Darlington Street in the 1930s.

At the same time as the cosmetic and structural changes were taking place, management were making alterations on the operational side of the business.

During the early 1920s, the company adopted limited liability, becoming James Beattie Ltd, making it an entity of its own in the eyes of the law for the first time. In 1964, the firm became a Public Limited Company, James Beattie PLC, meaning customers could now buy its shares on the stock market.

Perhaps the most significant moment in the company's history, however, came in 2005, when the firm was taken over by department store chain House of Fraser. It had been an independent family-run business since its inception, so the move sparked outrage among many workers.

Ninety-four-year-old Mary Boddy, who was the company's catering manager for 35 years until retiring in 1980, was less than impressed at the time. She organised for two coachloads of Beatties employees from various branches to head down to London for a protest.

But now she is more than happy with the way her former workplace is run, and says it has retained everything that always made it so special.

Mrs Boddy, who worked under James Beattie Junior, known to employees as Jimmy, said: "To me, Wolverhampton is Beatties and Beatties is Wolverhampton.

"It was absolutely wonderful to work there. I'd go back tomorrow if Jimmy Beattie was still alive.

Wonderful

"He used to come around the store every morning with his little black book in his pocket. He was a real gentleman, but if you saw that black book you thought, 'Oh no.'

"Many times I was called in to his office. I was a cheeky thing." Mrs Boddy, of Finchfield, Wolverhampton, remembers how everyone working for Beatties felt 'part of the same family', and such is their bond that she still organises monthly meetings for former staff.

She is also one of those to have donated personal items to House of Fraser for its archives, which it handed to Wolverhampton City Archives in July.

The exhibition has been divided into four glass cabinet displays, each chronicling a different period in the company's history, plus four wall displays featuring pictures of the Beatties family and of the company at key moments in its past.

Beatties also opened branches in Solihull, Birkenhead, Aylesbury, Birmingham Dudley, and Northampton, the latter three of which have since closed.

The exhibition will run until March 29.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1984

HURRICANE force winds of up to 80mph wrought havoc to the West Midlands. The roof of some maisonettes in the Blakenhall area of Wolverhampton was blown across a road minutes before dozens of schoolchildren passed by. The roof of a grocery shop in Wolverhampton's Cannock Road also fell onto a car, but the couple inside were able to clamber out.

SOARING tea prices sparked a wave of panic buying across the West Midlands, with fears that supplies could run out if calm did not return to the market. Many supermarkets introduced tea rationing after the Indian government announced new export restrictions. Phil Parkes, who owned W T M Snape tea merchants in Queen Street, Wolverhampton, said there had been customers queuing outside.

1994

THE new Bishop of Wolverhampton sparked a political storm saying he did not believe Government minister Tim Yeo should have resigned over his adultery. Rt Rev Michael Bourke said: "Everyone knows politics is not a vicarage tea party. We have always had adulterous rulers and leaders." But chairman of Wolverhampton South West Conservative Association, Councillor Mrs Roseanne Williams, was outraged saying the comments were unbecoming of a bishop.

MOURNERS packed into St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton for the funeral of Leslie Stallard, the chairman of the Stars news shops chain. The 78-year-old had died following a stroke. He had spent 65 years with Midland News Association, the parent company of the Express & Star.

2004

HAROLD Shipman died after hanging himself with his bed sheets in his prison cell.

Shipman, Britain's most prolific serial killer, is thought to have been responsible for more than 215 murders. The former GP was serving a life sentence at Wakefield Prison following his conviction of murdering 15 patients.

y y y

VIEWS you would be unlikely to see in a guide book were set to feature in a calendar depicting a town's biggest eyesores. Stourbridge Township Council, an independent pressure group, was seeking to publish a calendar depicting the town's biggest eyesores in an attempt to shame Dudley Council to spruce up rundown areas. The group was seeking nominations for sights which could appear on the calendar, with derelict properties and a dingy subway among those being considered.

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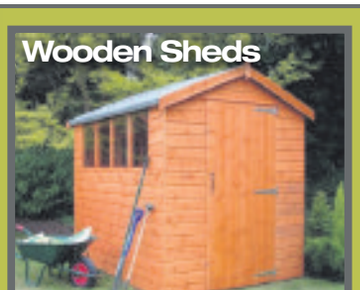

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LETTERS

Not really an old school argument

MY OLD friend Keith Watkins (letters December 20) gives an insight into life in a secondary modern school in the 1950s.

His touching anecdotes, however, don't really constitute an argument in favour of selective education. He and his successful friends had really just made the very creditable best of the hand which 11-plus failure had dealt them. The fact remains that grammar schools were – and the surviving ones still are – overwhelmingly middle-class in their intake.

The much vaunted 'bright working-class boy' is very much a minority.

The world has moved on from when Keith and I were schoolboys. I went to grammar school and ended up gathering three degrees and other odd bits of paper from various institutions.

In my best earning years, I probably earned more than my primary school classmates who went to a secondary modern school, but our lifetime earnings were probably not that different, after taking into account the years I spent in education.

When Keith and I were 15, a boy starting work in a factory could look forward to relatively well-paid, secure work. That is no longer the case. Towns like Walsall, which once prospered on the earnings of a reasonably paid manual working class, now fester with closed shops and payday loan sharks.

It will probably amaze people under 40 to learn that the teachers for whom Keith has so much affection were almost certainly not graduates, for very few secondary modern teachers had a degree at that time.

Keith does mention one entirely laudable feature of the old secondary modern school: it didn't require its pupils to do an evening shift of homework. Secondary modern schools also managed to educate their pupils without requiring them to dress identically

It might be interesting to ask present-day advocates of grammar schools to break their silence about the secondary moderns and to assure us that kids attending them would be required neither to do homework nor wear uniform. I'm not holding my breath.

ALAN T HARRISON,
Green Lane, Walsall

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
Walsall Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Our generation was the more fortunate

WITH regard to the letter from G Lewis of Finchfield. I was one of those wartime babies who worked right up to retirement, having left school at 15 in my case. It feels strange to be classed as a pariah by such people as Nigel Hastilow. Perhaps our generation was fortunate we had full employment in our working lives. It seems now I should be grateful for small mercies – bus pass and £100 fuel allowance.

I accept we are now in a different time and there is some belt tightening to do, but don't heap it all on us pensioners. We've been through the era of 'Never had it so good', three-day weeks and strikes, selling off of the family silver and letting money be god and interest rates of 15 per cent.

In all this time the majority of us kept our heads down. In the 1960s some us were fortunate to buy our own houses, others had the chance in the 80s. We tried to put a bit by in private pensions, which is taxed.

Successive Governments, from red to blue, left it to the next one in power. The present one would have done the same if it hadn't have been for corrupt bank dealings in America which brought us to where we are now. Someone had to get the blame and who were easy pickings? The pensioners. I feel for the next generation as they won't have the same chance as we had. They will get old knowing we have squandered their inheritance – as pundits will tell them.

G SMITH, Great Wyrley

Delighted at Julie's reward for her efforts

HAVING had a letter published last year, advocating that Julie Bailey should be formally recognised for her bravery in exposing the 'criminal neglect' that existed at Stafford Hospital and the gags that had been enforced upon the staff who worked there. I am delighted to see that her efforts have been rewarded, albeit at a high cost to herself.

I can appreciate the concern of some staff, who felt that their livelihood had been put at risk, however, Ms Bailey did not cause this situation, she merely exposed it, together with those who were responsible, not only for the loss of jobs but the loss of lives, many of them and these are the people who should be brought to the fore, not her.

Julie's efforts will have saved many more lives in the future, not only at Stafford but all over the country, by putting the spotlight, on the disgracefully poor level of care, that exists, in many hospitals.

Allan Kyte
Gorsey Lane
Great Wyrley

Silly trading is bringing shops to their knees

'BROWSE time' is bringing out the worst in our shoppers and doesn't show the best of our retail offers on our high streets or out-of-town shopping malls.

Shopping on a Sunday has been restricted to six hours for years because of archaic and ancient laws or conventions. Many shop over the internet to benefit from home delivery or choose to 'click and collect' at shops, to avoid queuing.

On Sunday, shops open at 10am but fail to inform shoppers that the electronic pay points are not available until 10.30am – resulting in half an hour of 'browse time'.

Ill-mannered shoppers thoughtlessly abuse the retail staff for the delay in service.

Shops should highlight the delay more clearly to avoid the aggro!

Modernise our retail laws to reflect modern lifestyles. If the High Street doesn't improve and adapt it will disappear into the past.

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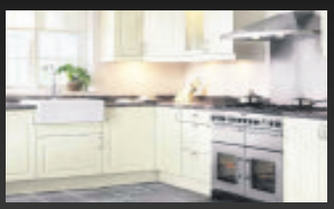

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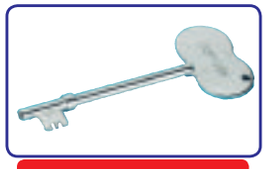

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NEWS

Honeymoon wait for fan to face justice

THE HONEYMOON was over – literally – for a football thug as he finally faced justice for his part in major violence between dozens of Shrewsbury and Walsall fans.

In November, Alan Fields admitted a charge of violent disorder linked to fighting between the two sets of supporters in October 2012. But sentencing was delayed so he could get married and go on honeymoon in Majorca.

But he returned to Shrewsbury Crown Court to be handed a six-month prison sentence, suspended for 12 months. Fields, aged 40, of Farringdon Road, Walsall, has also been banned from attending football matches for four years and was required to pay £300 costs.

The court heard that Fields had five other football-related public order violence convictions to his name.

Trouble broke out in Shrewsbury town centre at 1pm ahead of the match on October 14, 2012. Three police officers were injured as they tried to quell the violence. CCTV footage was shown of Fields confronting rival supporters.

Mr Nigel Ford, defending, said his client's recent marriage has had a 'very significant effect on him', with his wife already stopping him from going to football matches.

As part of the sentence, Fields will also remain under the supervision of the Probation Service for 12 months.

Courses at college get high praise

WALSALL College has been praised by the head of Ofsted in his annual report.

Sir Michael Wilshaw commended the college for its 'excellent use' of courses to boost the prospects of students and target local, regional and national labour markets.

by David Banner

Sir Michael, who is also the chief inspector of schools in England, commended the college's 'determination' to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

He said students had developed practical skills well above the standard expected for the level of their course.

The college became the first general further education college to receive an outstanding Ofsted grade under the new inspection framework in the UK in February last year.

It was also the first ever to receive an outstanding rating in the Black Country.

The Ofsted Annual Report states: "Walsall College's determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning and students' experience was captured in very clear strategic ambitions and values that permeated all the college's activities and placed students at the heart of the college's work.

"Students developed practical skills well above the standard expected for the level of their course. The college makes excellent use of labour market intelligence to ensure that most of the courses are carefully matched to local, regional and national socio-economic needs."

Walsall College principal and chief executive, Jatinder Sharma, said it was 'fantastic' to be used as a case study in the report.

Mr Sharma said: "It has been a hugely successful year for Walsall College and we are proud of what we continue to achieve in Walsall and further afield.

"The skills they learn here ensure they are work ready and in turn help support the growth of local, regional and national businesses."

Couple right on target

Sheila and Arthur Luke celebrate their golden anniversary

A DARTS game and a match-making sister brought them together – and Sheila and Arthur Luke are now celebrating 50 years of marriage. The couple, of Walsall Wood, met up after Mrs Luke's sister, Winnie Kelly, suggested they go on a date. She was a member of the Wheatsheaf pub's darts team in Walsall and had got to know Mr Luke.

Mrs Luke said: "She told him she knew a nice girl for him – and nine months later we were getting married."

At the time they had to apply for a special licence because their marriage, held at Cannock Register Office, took place close to Christmas on December 21, 1963. But with Mrs Luke having to commute from her home in Nechells, Birmingham to see her fiance in Brownhills, they persuaded officials that the ceremony should take place.

Mrs Luke went on to work on the production line for Typhoo tea in Digbeth, Birmingham, while her husband's jobs included laying gas mains and a copper inspector for IMI Refiners in Darlaston. They have a daughter, Kim, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren and live in Hill Park, Walsall Wood.

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NEWS

Brothers in £1.3m fake notes plot start lock-up

THEIR plan was to use their printing firm's Christmas and New Year break to churn out almost £1.3 million worth of fake banknotes.

But two apparently respectable Walsall businessemen brothers ultimately had their plot thwarted and have been their first few days lock up after being sentenced seven years imprisonment.

Amrit and Prem Karra acted as 'masterminds and architects' of the highly-sophisticated counterfeiting operation, Birmingham Crown Court heard. The two men and their two accomplices even worked through the night producing what were described as 'near perfect' forgeries.

Jailing the brothers along with two other men from West Bromwich and Birmingham, who also took part in the scam, Judge Richard Bond said such offences undermined the integrity of the UK's financial system.

A Komori lithographic press that was used to print the fake notes

Forgeries

The Karra brothers and their brothers-in-law, Rajiv Kumar and Yash Mahey, were all convicted of conspiracy to produce counterfeit notes following a five-week trial.

The trial heard Amrit Karra, of Broadway North, Walsall; Prem Karra, of Brookhouse Road, Walsall; Kumar, of Clarkes Lane, West Bromwich; and Mahey, of Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, printed the fake £10 notes with a face value of at least £1.27 million.

Amrit Karra, aged 45, Prem Karra, 43, Kumar, 40, and Mahey, 44, used specialist paper, inks and foil to run off the forgeries at a printworks in Hockley, Birmingham.

The fake notes have been found all over the country but the most significantly affected areas were the West Midlands, London and Kent.

Prem Karra, left and Amrit Karra

Richard Warner, the National Crime Agency's Birmingham Branch Commander, said: "These men ran a sophisticated operation that posed a significant threat to the UK economy at the time. By working closely with industry experts our officers stopped them causing more damage. Counterfeiting is not a victimless crime. It takes money out of the pockets of individuals and businesses."

Jailing both Mahey and Kumar for four-and-a-half years, and barring the Karra brothers from acting as company directors, Judge Bond said the offences were motivated by greed. The NCA said Karra Design and Print had legitimate business contracts but the four men had used the firm's computers and machinery to counterfeit notes in late 2010 and early 2011.

The vast majority of the 'extremely high quality' notes even had individual serial numbers, and were only identified as fakes as they were sorted by banks to be loaded into cash machines.

Lawyers for the Karra brothers argued that the conspiracy was a response to financial trouble at the printing firm. Mr David Emanuel, defending Prem Karra, described the 'one-off' printing of counterfeit notes as a misguided attempt to save the business, and said his client was someone who had been highly regarded within the business community.

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NEWS

Driver uninjured as car hits fence

AN ELDERLY driver was unhurt after her car left the road and struck at fence near Walsall Arboretum.

The accident on Friday afternoon happened near the traffic lights junction in Lichfield Street.

Crews from Walsall Fire Station also earlier attended a minor smash between a VW Golf and a Vauxhall Corsa at the junction of Goscote Lane and Livingstone Road, in Goscote, at 2.30pm.

Arts venue bookings up

A POPULAR arts centre is proving successful with bookings being taken months in advance, a council chief has said.

Forest Arts Centre in Walsall, which is being lined up for an additional £200,000 refurbishment, has a range of facilities including two auditoriums, dance studio, community cinema and also a recording studio.

There is also a digital arts suite, soundproofed rehearsal rooms, arts classrooms and conference suites.

In a report to the council, head of leisure and culture Anthony Harris, said: "The public programme at Forest Arts Centre continues to offer a diverse range of theatre, concerts, films, shows, exhibitions and workshops which have attracted enterprising performances and capacity audiences.

"Feedback from clients suggests that Forest Arts Centre is their preferred venue for conferences, meetings and training events.

"The lead-in time to book Auditorium One for major theatre or music events is now as much as 14 months, dependent upon the time of year required."

Traders attack threat to custom with closure

WORK has started on a bridge in Staffordshire as part of the £30 million electrification of the Chase Line which links up to Walsall.

But traders in the area have aired their concerns over the closure of the bridge in Station Road, Hednesford, after businesses in Walsall suffered a 25 per cent slump in trade following a similar bridge rebuild.

The Hednesford bridge will be closed was three months, with work set to be completed by April.

But the owner of Chase Car Sales in Station Road, Craig Tarr, says closing off the road has led to customers and sales reps being unable to find his premises located on the Greens Industrial Estate. "No thought has been put into this whatsoever," said 44-year-old Mr Tarr.

Workers in place closing the road off

"No signs have been put up saying we're still open and, due to the diversion signs in place, those coming from Stafford can't even access us."

Meanwhile, businesses have criticised the closure of a section of Broad Lane, Bloxwich, for the electrification project. H&S Food Store, based on the road, say they have been hundreds of pounds down a week as they miss out on passing trade between Bloxwich and Essington.

The £3m work on the bridge started in November and is due to continue until the end of March.

A Network Rail spokesman said: "We demolished the old bridge over Christmas and we're now preparing to build a new one high enough to take traffic over the electric overhead wires."

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NEWS

Members of the Walsall Inner Wheel have donated sports equipment to the pupils at Whitehall School

Kicking off new year for school

A NEW YEAR brought new sports equipment for school pupils following a kind donation.

The Walsall Inner Wheel group joined forces to raise cash towards toys for Whitehall Infants School.

They purchased soft footballs, skipping ropes, rubber rings and hula hoops forthe West Bromwich Road school.

A series of fundraising coffee mornings and other charity events were organised to raise around £100.

The group which consists of around 20 women members is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year.

They meet at United Reformed Church, Broadway, Walsall, on the first Tuesday of the month from 2.15 to 4pm.

Members handed over books for the library last year and after speaking to the headteacher purchased new equipment this time round.

Press secretary for Walsall Inner Wheel, Elizabeth Vodden, said: "We handed over sports and play things for the young children.

"The children played with the toys and also thanked us very much for the gifts, they were all very, very polite."

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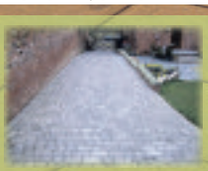

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NEWS

Reprieve for club which is set for move

A YOUTH club that has run for decades will be allowed to continue at a site earmarked for closure until the end of the month.

This will be while an alternative venue is found, council bosses have revealed. Aldridge Manor House, which has been the village youth club for 50 years, was due to close last month as part of council cuts.

by Craig Hughes

The site in Little Aston Road is to be sold off, but a replacement base for the youth club is yet to be found.

The council has said its Integrated Young People's Support Service will continue to provide activities for young people in the area and a consultation over the controversial changes has been taking place on ways to move forward.

More than 600 people took part in a poll and were asked for their views and ideas on how best to provide youth work in the area, with youngsters ranking sports activities high on their list of preferred activities.

Other features rated highly by young people included accessibility, safety, all year round access and an attractive environment. Feedback was also sought from parents and the community. Council bosses have thanked those who have already shared their views.

Councillor Rachel Andrew, Walsall Council's portfolio holder for children's services, said: "The views of young people have been our primary concern throughout this process.

"It is their youth club and we must be sure that the activities and support available are things that young people want to be involved with and that they take place at a venue that they are happy with. Thank you to those young people who have shared their views."

Youngsters dip in for art

ARTWORK from Walsall youngsters has been provided for a large display at the National Waterways Museum. Students at Barr Beacon have provided a contribution for the River and Canal Trust. The final work will be displayed at the Birmingham Library once it is complete and later it will be displayed at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. The theme for the project is based on the Heartlands Ring which is a group of canals in the Birmingham city centre.

Co-op matchmaker

David and Mildred Russell celebrate their milestone

SHE knew her future mother-in-law long before she met her husband-to-be.

The teenage Mildred Ward used to work in the Co-op in Darlaston where Mrs Russell was a customer. The pair got on well and the older woman decided Mildred would make a good match for her soldier son. "She set us up," said Mildred.

"David came into the shop with a friend and bought some cigarettes from me.

"He was very shy but I thought he was all right and we started courting."

Love blossomed and two years later on Boxing Day in 1953 the happy couple married at St Lawrence's Church in Darlaston.

The newly-weds held a reception in The Brown Lion nearby before they caught a bus to Evesham for a few days' honeymoon in her aunt's cottage. "She handed us the keys on our wedding day. It was lovely," said Mildred, now 79. The couple, who live in Oak Avenue, Bentley, went on to have three children – David, Hel-en and Tracey and five grandchildren.

The big day in 1953

Mildred left the Co-op to work for the next 30 years at the scrap metal dealers where her husband, now 82, was transport manager.

We need your views on Walsall's urgent and emergency care services

NHS
Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group

Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is conducting a listening exercise throughout the month of January. We are asking for views from Walsall people, and anyone else who uses urgent care services in the borough, to help us improve our services.

Urgent and emergency care services provide help, advice and treatment when you have a serious illness or injury (an emergency), or need to see a nurse or doctor quickly (urgently).

These services include:
- GP practices
- GP out of hours services
- NHS111
- Walsall Walk-in Health Centre (based in Market Square, Walsall)
- Walsall Emergency and Urgent Care Centre (located next to A&E at Walsall Manor Hospital)
- Walsall Manor Hospital A&E
- West Midlands Ambulance Service

Your feedback will be greatly appreciated and will help us to develop a plan for how we can improve local urgent and emergency care services.

People can give their views via an online survey available on the Walsall CCG website: www.walsallccg.nhs.uk or www.walsallccg.nhs.uk/urgentcare You can also complete a feedback form at one of the following locations on the dates and times specified:

- Asda Darlaston on Friday 10 January, 10am-3pm
- Walsall Manor Hospital - Atrium on Monday 13 January, 1pm-3pm
- Choose Well Bus at Walsall Art Gallery on Friday 17 January, 9am-5pm
- Walsall Manor Hospital - Atrium on Monday 20 January, 1pm-3pm
- Asda Darlaston on Thursday 30 January, 10am-3pm

Forms will also be available for collection and drop-off at the following local housing offices between Monday 20 January and Friday 31 January:

- Central Walsall Housing Office, 100 Hatherton Street
- Brownhills Housing Office, 13 Silver Court, High Street
- Blakenall Housing Office, Thames Road
- Darlaston Housing Office, 45 King Street
- Willenhall Housing Office, Beechwood House

For further information on the review and to keep up to date with Walsall CCG's news and events, visit www.walsallccg.nhs.uk, contact us through our email address: getinvolved@walsall.nhs.uk or follow us on Twitter @WalsallCCG

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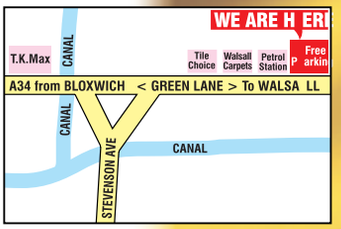

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Diamond Doyles

Celebrating – Dennis and Barbara Doyle of Blakenall

THEY literally fell head over heels during their first meeting – at a roller skating rink. And now diamond Walsall couple Dennis and Barbara Doyle are celebrating 60 years of marriage.

The pair met at a roller skating rink in Colchester.

Mr Doyle said: "I was in the Royal Artillery and was with my Army pals. She was with her friends. There was an accident where she was roller skating and tripped over my foot. It went from there."

The couple, who are both 82, were married at St George's Church in Walsall town centre, which has since been demolished and now are looking to hold a big family party at Pelsall Labour Club as part of a double celebration when their daughter, Wendy, turns 40.

On their wedding day

They reached the 60-year milestone on December 19 and celebrated with friends and family at a party held at the Kings Head in Blakenall.

The couple, of Thames Road, Blakenall, have seven children, 18 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Retired engineer Mr Doyle, spent 39 years working for British Rail.

Where there are wheels there's a way to keep fit

THOSE thinking about stepping up their fitness levels in 2014 are being invited to take to two wheels.

Young and old are getting on their bikes to keep fit and active with one Walsall-based family cycling club which has links to Pelsall.

Members of the Wheel We Make It group meet on every Saturday morning for rides of between 10 and 14 miles.

There are around 60 people, aged from seven to 76 who are part of the cycling club which travels to the likes of Sandwell Valley and Staffordshire.

But more men and women are being encouraged to join and start cycling at least once a week throughout 2014.

Routes

Secretary Dave Woodcock said: "We are always looking out for new members. They can cycle together in the safety of a group, meet lots of new friends and we can help them with any mechanical problems they may have.

"After people have been coming for a few weeks they get fit and we have got lots of traffic free routes. We go through some nice countryside."

The group meets at 9.30am and on the first Saturday of the month gathers outside Holy Trinity School, Church Street, in Clayhanger.

On the second weekend of the month they meet at Fitness First, Lichfield Road, Walsall Wood, then at Chasewater Country Park the third week and the final Saturday of the month is by the Railway pub in Station Road, Pelsall.

It costs £2 a year to join the club and for more information visit www.chasecycling.co.uk or call 07866 028154.

Dave Woodcock and Graham Mason, and fellow members of the Wheel We Make It cycle club, who meet at Clayhanger Village Community Centre, and are always looking for new members

Goliath of a CD deal

HEAVY metal group Disarm Goliath hopes to build on their growing popularity after securing a record deal for its latest album.

The Walsall-based band first released the album Born to Rule on CD, but were snapped up by the German label Pure Steel.

Bass guitarist and founder of the group, Steve Surch, of Pelsall, said: "The label released it as a limited edition vinyl under licence."

The band released their debut album Only The Devil Can Stop Us through their own mini label, selling nearly 1,000 copies to date.

Fall in crime on vehicles

VEHICLE crime has been slashed in a village over the last few months, police have revealed.

Officers in Pelsall said the reports of criminal damage dropped from 16 in August to six in November.

Members of the Pelsall Neighbourhood Watch have asked people not to leave items on display.

Flower group in first meet

WALSALL Fuchsia and Flower Society will hold its first meeting of the new year on January 20. The group meets at Walsall Labour Club, in Church Road, Pelsall, at 7.30pm.

Roger Haliwood will be giving a talk on the National Memorial Arboretum.

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NEWS

Musical talent lines up in tribute to drummer

Ryan Cornforth, front left, from band The Rimes and Jon Brookes' brother Tim, with back, Adam Paget, Jon's niece Michaela Brookes, Councillor Elaine Costigan and Karen Phipps ahead of a concert for the late Charlatans drummer

AN ARRAY of musical talent will be on display at a charity concert organised in memory of the late Charlatans drummer Jon Brookes.

Local bands will be performing at Darlaston All Active on February 8. A guitar signed by EastEnders' Danny Dyer will be auctioned to raise funds.

Mr Brookes, who was from Burntwood, died in August at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham after battling a brain tumour. The gig has been organised by Adam Paget, a lifelong friend of Mr Brookes. Mr Paget said: "We organised the night so friends of Jon and people he knew could pay their respects.

"We've had so many bands wanting to play. I met Danny in Sheffield at an event and he agreed to sign a guitar. He was a lovely guy."

Performers on the night include the bands Marquis Drive, Isolated Atoms, Junk Monkey, Little Liam and The Rimes. Mr Brookes once managed Marquis Drive. Cannock Orpheus Male Voice Choir will also be performing a Charlatans hit. Wolverhampton artist Paul Pilgrim will auction off paintings of Mr Brookes.

In 2010 he suffered a seizure while on tour in Philadelphia. He had been receiving treatment for a brain tumour. To buy tickets, call 07857 013857.

Jon Brookes, who died last August

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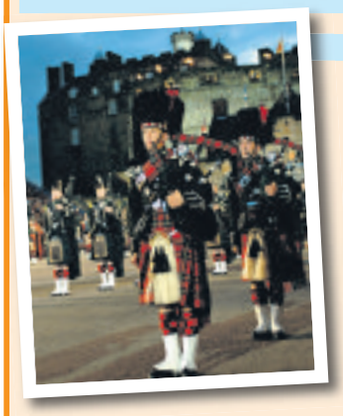

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NEWS

Vue of £12m site unveiled

A 'LANDMARK leisure scheme' is how cinema bosses have described a planned new £12 million development for Walsall town centre, as a new image emerged of how the venue will look.

This artist impression has been unveiled of the nine-screen Vue cinema and restaurant development which is due to open in spring next year.

It has been released after Cordwell Property Group announced that work on the development in Littleton Street next to Tesco, is due to begin by Easter following the exchanging of contracts.

Confirmed

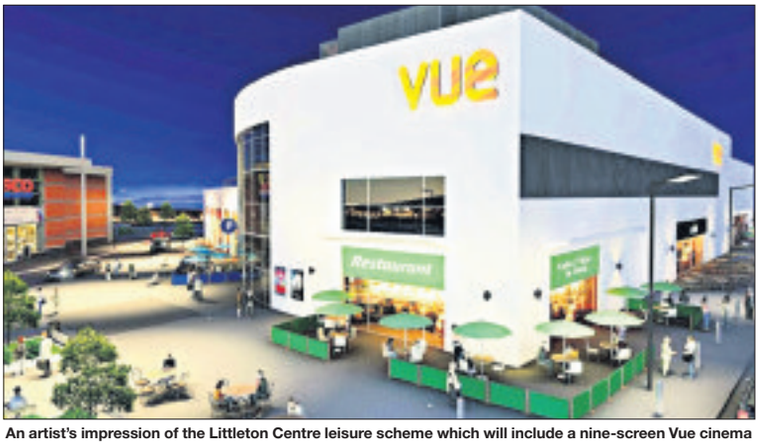
The Littleton Centre development will help create more than 200 jobs. Together with the signing of Vue, Cordwell has also exchanged development and funding agreement with London-based partners Bride Hall.

Bosses at Vue Entertainment voiced their support for the project.

Property director Geoff Moore said it would offer the town a 'landmark leisure scheme'. "Having formally confirmed that we will operate a state-of-the-art cinema, we are looking forward to creating an exciting, sensory experience at the Littleton Centre."

Cordwell Property Group is the first of two developers planning to build cinemas in the town to announce a deal has been struck. A contractor is due to be appointed in the near future to build the new development. It will be the first cinema in the heart of the borough for more than 20 years.

The development will fit in with the long-term £400m Gigaport scheme which aims to create a business and office corridor through the heart of the borough. Cinema wars were sparked in the town last summer as rival plans for an Odeon at the Walsall Waterfront also received planning permission from Walsall Council. Kier Property is behind the plans for the Odeon but remain tight-lipped about the future the scheme.



An artist's impression of the Littleton Centre leisure scheme which will include a nine-screen Vue cinema

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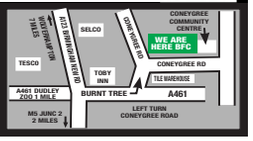

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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

The head pupil's view on life at college

Head and deputy boys and girls have written a collective letter to explain why they feel, St Francis of Assisi (SFA) Catholic Technology College is such a progressive place to gain an education.

STAFF and pupils feel happy and safe in the SFA community where teachers and learners have a close working relationship.

This creates a strong support for students to achieve their ambitions and aspirations. As students of the sixth form based in Aldridge, we are encouraged to be independent, creative and confident young people.

We have been taught from the start to be hard working and dedicated students who have a scholarly attitude towards school and the wider world of work.

It is incredibly easy to become overwhelmed with school work when you make the decision to continue with further education.

However, at SFA the teaching faculty is dedicated to ensuring that students achieve their full academic potential.

They ensure that students will always have a strong support system to assist in overcoming problems or difficulties they may face during their time here.

We believe it is vital to demonstrate proactive behaviour and work hard in order to be the best that we can be, therefore at St Francis we carry out our motto, 'Nil Satis Optimum' – only the best is good enough. Sixth form students play a vital role in our school community and we are involved in most events held during or after school where we engage with the younger students, parents and teachers alike.

We are expected to be role models inside and outside of school and evidence of this can witnessed in the dedication our head boy, head girl, senior prefects and subject ambassadors show.

Our Catholic ethos is the heart of our school and our morals and beliefs shape our community. This creates an environment where everybody is seen as an individual and is important.

We have pupils from as far afield as Lichfield and Tamworth as well as students from Birmingham, Walsall, Sutton and Aldridge itself.

Whatever career path you decide to pursue, our school will provide the support and guidance in order to ensure that you have the best chance of achieving your goals.

As students we are also provided with a wide range of opportunities to help develop a perspective of the world around us. For example, we take part in the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. Further opportunities such as university visits or inviting outside speakers to provide expert talks on their field of work ensure we have a clear awareness of the future paths we hope to take post-18.

What we believe makes our sixth form excel is the opportunities on offer to consolidate learning and help SFA students stand out when they move on to higher education, training or employment.

We all feel that St Francis' sixth form has positively impacted on our lives, enhanng and building our characters, shaping us into better all round people.

St Francis of Assisi would be perfect forany student who wants a happy, secure and successful place to study.

Our school has highly qualified staff to guide you to success and we firmly believe that if you show ambition and passion for your subject then you will achieve success in every way possible.

St Francis of Assisi head and deputy boys and girls Jake, Jack, Amber and Eden

Going to great lengths for Staffordshire learners

Wherever your skills and ambitions lie, the college has a support network to help

St Francis of Assisi (SFA) Catholic Technology College student Jack explains how settling into the school was straightforward, as a learner who lives in Staffordshire.

AS a Lichfield resident, going to St Francis of Assisi (SFA) Catholic Technology College was daunting for me initially, as there were only a couple of people I knew.

It meant me going out of my way and travelling quite a distance to go to a school full of people I didn't know.

However, Mrs Mullins and the rest of the school made it as easy as possible for me to settle down and make friends. If you are worried about joining our school and not knowing anyone, I can assure you there is nothing to worry about as everyone here will do their very best to help you settle down and make friends, just as I did. You can also apply for a bursary to help towards your transport costs. The school and sixth form have had quite an impact on my life, I believe it has made me a better person and enhanced all my characteristics. All the staff here work very hard in putting on various activity days for all the sixth form, such as the aspirations day that we recently had.

Careers

Successful people from different careers, many of whom were past pupils, came to talk to us about how to get where they are today. It is days like these that helps to prepare us and build qualities that we need for post-18 career paths, whether it be university or apprenticeships. We are also given many opportunities that other schools do not offer, things such as an annual Lourdes trip.

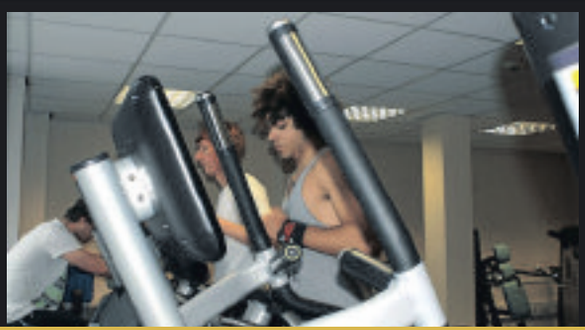
I believe the Catholic ethos in school makes a very warm, friendly environment that makes all of us feel safe and secure and I would recommend SFA to any student looking at post-16 options who are looking for a happy, successful place to study.

Former students – a clinical nurse specialist and junior sister from Birmingham Children's Hospital celebrating aspirations day at St Francis of Assisi College

Rated Good and Outstanding by Ofsted

SFA

St Francis of Assisi
Catholic Technology College



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NEWS

£3.6m sets college on course for hub

An artist's impression of how the proposed business and sports hub at Walsall College will look following the grant

WALSALL College's planned business and sports hub, which will create around 250 jobs, is one step closer to becoming a reality after the project secured a £3.6 million grant.

The Skills Funding Agency has backed the £11m scheme which is planned for vacant land next to Walsall College's existing Wisemore Campus.

A letter from the SFA was received by bosses at the college to confirm its successful funding application which was put forward in September.

The college has agreed to buy the land for the new build from Walsall Council and the three-storey hub will include a business incubation centre and sports hall with badminton courts to Sport England standards.

There will also be dance and fitness studios, a sports training and injury clinic, spa facilities, a restaurant and car park. It will have a glass roof, modern furniture and open spaces.

Bosses at the college hope the business incubation centre will help facilitate growth in the local economy and boost employment opportunities and that it will provide a hub for corporate events and give employers an opportunity to network. A planning application has been submitted to the local authority.

by Simon Stone

Work is planned to start this summer and be completed by summer next year.

Deb Rajania, director of operations and resources at Walsall College, said: "The college was rated as outstanding by Ofsted in February 2013 and we are committed to going beyond outstanding by continuing to support the regeneration of Walsall."

Brian Lane, chairman of governors, principal and boss Jatinder Sharma, regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew and Deb Rajania

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MEMORY LANE

Prominent political and literary figures were among the regular visitors to Teddesley Hall at Penkridge

Teddesley Hall in all its splendour. It was built by Sir Edward Littleton in 1754 and demolished by its new owner in 1954

The Duke of Wellington, who became Prime Minister

Baron land became a top political salon

ONCE home to many of the leading lights of Georgian and Victorian era, Teddesley Hall was built in 1754 by Sir Edward Littleton.

He developed a large park surrounding the hall, noted for the quality of its cattle and its reputation for agricultural innovation.

This was later enhanced by his great nephew and heir, Edward Walhouse who changed his name to Littleton. He became an MP for Staffordshire County and then South Staffordshire and in 1812 was created the first Baron Hatherton

Under Baron Hatherton, Teddesley became a political and literary salon. It was here that many of the landed gentry would enjoy soirees and sporting weekends in the woods at nearby Cannock Chase. The likes of the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel – both future Prime Ministers, William Huskisson and politician's wife Lady Anne Wilmott-Horton all graced the hall with their presence.

MP Huskisson, a former Brewood Grammar School pupil, was killed when struck by the locomotive Stephenson's Rocket, while Lady Anne is said to have been the inspiration behind the line 'She walks in beauty like the night' from a Lord Byron poem.

Memorials

Baron Hatherton was married for 37 years to Hyacinthe Wellesley, the daughter of the Duke of Wellington's older brother Richard.

When she died she was buried at Penkridge and the parish church, St Michael's and All Angels, contains memorials to her, her daughter, also called Hyacinthe, and her granddaughter who died from tuberculosis at the age of 32. Following his wife's death, Baron Hatherton remarried. His new bride was Caroline Anne, widow of Edward Davenport, of Capenthorpe, Macclesfield.

He became a staunch supporter of Staffordshire in Parliament and was also in favour of catholic emancipation. In 1831, through his own persistence, the 'truck system', by which workers were paid with good instead of money, was outlawed.

The hall ceased to be the family home in 1920 and during the Second World War was requisitioned by the government to be used for billeting troops and prisoners of war.

After the war it remained empty for many years and was sold off by the fifth Lord Hatherton. The hall was demolished by its new owner in 1954.

Teddesley Hall as viewed from the lake that runs alongside

A view of the gardens with an ornamental bridge across the lake

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For more information on the Sixth Form please contact Mr N. Critchley, Assistant Principal/Director of Sixth Form Studies.

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Walsall Academy is pleased to announce that Applications are now being accepted for Sixth Form September 2014

An Information Evening will be held on Tuesday 28th January

For more information contact us for an application pack or visit www.walsallacademy.com or scan the QR Code on your mobile phone

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CLUB NEWS

Club that helps you develop

WALL HEATH CAMERA CLUB

SINCE its formation in 1982 Wall Heath Camera Club has grown and flourished into one of the most popular and well respected clubs in the West Midlands.

The club is affiliated to the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain through the Midland Counties Photographic Federation among others, and is a member of Dudley Arts Council.

Whether you are a beginner looking for help or an experienced photographer looking for a new and exciting challenge, Wall Heath Camera Club helps you 'develop'.

The club welcomes new members, regardless of previous experience. If you're looking for somewhere to enjoy your photography, and to join a club whose social activities have always been as important as the picture taking, why not join us?

Main meetings take place on alternate Wednesdays at Dudley Kingswinford RFC, Swindon Road, Wall Heath.

Take a look **wallheathcameraclub.weebly.com** to see the club's calendar of events. Typical meetings include competitions, presentations and talks, demonstrations, travelling exhib- itions and practical sessions.

Or come along to a free open night on Wednesday January 22 from 8pm. Anyone joining on the night will get the first two meetings for free.

Tales of Christmas past and present

Patricia Boyd was December's speaker

BILBROOK WI

THE December meeting was the Christmas Party for members and invited guests only.

President Julie welcoming everyone ahead of a brief summary of any business. She then introduced speaker Patricia Boyd who entertained everyone with facts and anecdotes on the subject of Christmas past and present.

A vote of thanks was given by Win. Julie invited Patricia to join the ladies for afternoon tea. The tables had been laid out and decorated with miniature ivy plants and looked very seasonal. The food was provided by the members and the range was amazing. There was also wine, juice, tea and coffee. The afternoon closed with the prize-giving for the competitions, followed by the raffle.

Future speakers will be Annette Christophers on 'clay – a talk with a difference' and Alan Peace on the history of Himley Hall.

Visitors are always welcome, £2.50 entrance to include light refreshments. Meetings are held on the third Monday in the month from 2-4pm in Bilbrook Church Hall, Bilbrook Road, Bilbrook. Call Julie Hammersley on 01902 843867.

Guest's talk so ap-Peel-ing

BURNTWOOD WI

PRESIDENT Gwyneth Howells welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year and wished everyone a healthy and happy 2014 – the 95th anniversary of the Staffordshire Federation.

Wine was given by Linda Miller to celebrate her 65th birthday.

Speaker was Nigel Morris, a member of the Peel Society. His talk "The Peels of Tamworth" was very interesting and informative and was accompanied by a slide show.

Nigel told of the lives of the six Sir Robert Peels who lived at Drayton Manor. The most famous was the second Baronet who was twice Home Secretary and founded the Metropolitan Police. The Peel Collection and Police Museum can be seen at Middleton Hall Tamworth. The club is holding a Beetle Drive at Hammerwich Cricket Club in February, and a team of four will be representing Burntwood at the annual county quiz.

The competition was won by Thelma Littley, and the thought for the month was read by Ron Box.

The Christmas party collection of £130 went to The Young Careers Association.

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NEWS

Appeal upheld on nurse over crash

A NURSE has had a conviction for her involvement in a crash overturned – because of poor road markings.

Leila Zgolzelski was driving home from work when her Mini collided with a Vauxhall Corsa. Miss Zgolzelski, of Aldridge Road, Great Barr, was convicted at Telford Magistrates Court of driving without due care and attention.

The accident happened on September 12, 2012 on the Hortonwood Industrial Estate in Telford.

Now, her appeal has been upheld at Shrewsbury Crown Court.

The 29-year-old had been diverted from her usual route along the A442 by an accident, taking her through the Hortonwood estate, where she had never been before.

The court accepted her account she ended up on the wrong side of the road after failing to see a sharp left-hand bend.

Miss Zgolzelski showed the court photographs which she said highlighted a lack of road markings and signs.

Getting the big picture

STANDING tall inside the New Art Gallery in Walsall, this striking multi-coloured piece has been chosen to front a new permanent display. The eye-catching artwork is by Claudette Chambers and is part of the Back to Front: 40 Permanent Collection Gems which runs until November. The pieces on display have been chosen by members of staff at the art gallery, ranging from a collage made by Dean Kelland to old favourites such as the portrait of Sergeant Major William Purvis.

CCTV hope on man in car who stopped to ask for directions

A WOMAN was grabbed by her scarf as she offered a driver directions.

Police are investigating the alleged assault on the 21-year-old in Streetly, last Wednesday night.

The woman was left unhurt but shaken, and CCTV in the area is now being examined to trace the car.

Det Sgt Aki Heer said: "Detectives are investigating a report that a woman was assaulted by a driver on Bakers Lane, Streetly.

"Police were called at 5pm on Wednesday around 15 minutes after it is alleged a Walsall woman was grabbed by her scarf as she offered the driver of a dark car directions.

Forensic

"After a brief struggle, the woman broke free and ran home where her mother dialled 999.

"House to house enquiries have been conducted and items have been seized for forensic examination. Work continues to identify CCTV cameras in the area.

"Although uninjured, the woman has been left badly shaken. Detectives continue to work with the woman to secure a full and detail account of what happened."

Anyone with information should call Det Sgt Heer on 101, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

What's On!

Young Voices to sing in thousands

THE world's largest school choir is filling Birmingham's LG Arena with song this week during a series of performances concluding tomorrow night, Friday.

Young Voices is the largest school choir organiser in the world and it will bring together more than 24,000 children over four nights at the LG, where they will be joined by special guest Stacey Solomon.

A spokesman for Young Voices said: "These will be fantastic evenings of entertainment for parents, children and their teachers."

Tickets are available from the venue.

Only Fools would miss Boycie tour

BOYCIE, Marlene, Del Boy and Rodney may soon be reunited for an Only Fools And Horses TV revival but fans can catch up with Boycie at local theatres.

Actor John Challis has created Only Fools and Boycie and performs it at Bridgnorth's Theatre On The Steps on February 1, Lichfield's Garrick Theatre on March 7, Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre on March 8.

Jacked up for a milestone panto

OLDBURY Rep continues its 75th anniversary season with traditional panto Jack and the Beanstalk, written by Alan Wood, staged nightly with the final performances on Saturday afternoon and evening at the Barlow Theatre, in Spring Walk, Langley. Call 0121 552 2761.

Noel is living the high life in heels for Aussie musical

Life's a drag, from left, Graham Weaver, Noel Sullivan and Richard-Grieve in Priscilla Queen of the Desert *Picture by Paul Coltas*

AS well as shaving his chin, clean-cut former Hear'Say singer Noel Sullivan is having to shave his legs and armpits too for his latest stage role, as a drag queen strutting his stuff on two foot high heels.

The Cardiff-born singer found fame in 2001 on TV show Popstars, which launched the group Hear'Say. He has since created a career on stage in such shows as Grease, Flashdance The Musical and We Will Rock You. But the 33-year-old admits nothing had prepared him for the starring role of Tick and his drag queen alter-ego Mitzi in hit musical Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Movie

It is based on a cult favourite Australian movie, about the lives of three friends who hop aboard a battered old bus in search of love and freedom, and bring outrageous entertainment to the Outback.

Noel is sharing the role on tour with Jason Donovan and will be in the high heels when Priscilla rocks up at Wolverhampton Grand from January 27 to February 1.

He admits he first had to learn to walk in massive wedges and heels before learning the dance routines, which are performed in exotic costumes – including one made out of flip flops – to a succession of disco classics, including It's Raining Men and I Will Survive.

Noel will be joined on stage by former Neighbours actor Richard Grieve as Bernadette and Graham Weaveras Adam/Felicia.

New Priscilla star Noel Sullivan meets his alter-ego Mitzi

It will be the Night for Rod's songs

A HIT musical inspired by the songs of Rod Stewart comes to Birmingham next month. Ben Elton's West End show Tonight's The Night, The Rod Stewart Musical stars Jade Ewen from Sugababes and will be staged at the New Alexandra Thea-tre from February 24 to March 1.

The show premiered in London in 2003 and went on to play theatres across the UK. It features more than 20 classic Rod Stewart hits including Tonight's the Night, Hot Legs, Baby Jane, Do Ya Think I'm Sexy and Maggie May.

Sheeran's out with dates at LG Arena

BRIT Award winning singer Ed Sheeran has announced a UK tour which comes to the West Midlands this autumn.

The A-Team singer will play Birmingham's LG Arena on October 19 and 20. It will be his first headline tour in the UK since autumn 2012. Tickets are priced £37.20.

The 22-year old's debut '+' entered the UK albums chart at number one.

Comic makes his subversive Mark

COMEDIAN and activist Mark Thomas brings his latest show, 100 Acts of Dissent, to Edgbaston's Mac Theatre, on January 31 and February 1.

Tickets cost £15 (£10 concessions) to hear about his acts of comic subversion.

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SATURDAY'S TV 18.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Emma Willis

The Voice UK
BBC1, 7pm
Given Jeremy Renner and Christian Bale's rendition of Tom Jones's classic Delilah in acclaimed movie American Hustle, we doubt the Welsh recording legend would have turned round for them had they auditioned for this show, but plenty of other wannabe stars have impressed his ears. This week it's round two of the contest to find the nation's best new vocal talent. Coaches Kylie, Tom, will.i.am and Ricky Wilson aim is to build a team of a dozen singers or acts apiece, all chosen on their vocals alone. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes host.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Good Cook. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **1.15** Live Snooker: The Masters. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **5.35** Dynamo: Magician Impossible.

6.15 Reflex. Shane Richie hosts the game show in which families from Blackpool and Carlisle battle each other in a series of physical and mental challenges, with commentary by Ken Bruce.

7.00 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes front the second round of the all-singing, chair-spinning talent contest, with coaches Kylie Minogue, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson.

8.20 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers compete by listing as much as they know about given subjects. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws.

9.10 Casualty. New doctor Cal goes to the rescue of a girl in a limo hanging precariously off a bridge, while Ethan uncovers the truth about a student whose sight is endangered by flying glass.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, including Arsenal v Fulham at the Emirates Stadium and Liverpool v Aston Villa at Anfield; National Lottery Update.

11.45 The Football League Show.

1.05 Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.45 Film:** Sodom and Gomorrah. (1962) Biblical drama, starring Stewart Granger. **9.10** Life on Earth. (R) **10.05** Life on Earth. (R) **11.00** Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) **11.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **1.00** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **2.00** The A to Z of TV Cooking. **2.45 Film:** Ensign Pulver. (1964) Navy comedy, starring Robert Walker. **4.30** Live Snooker: The Masters. The first semi-final from Alexandra Palace, London.

6.00 Flog It! Paul Martin meets people in Derby who hope to make money selling their antiques at auction, and visits the Marmite factory in Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire. (R)

7.00 Live Snooker: The Masters. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the second semi-final from Alexandra Palace, London, where the line-up for the final will be confirmed. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

10.30 QI XL. Extended edition. Liza Tarbuck, Susan Calman and Sandi Toksvig join Alan Davies, with host Stephen Fry asking questions on a kaleidoscope of topics. Last in the series.

11.15 Film: Howl. (2010) Fact-based drama recreating the obscenity trial of beat poet Allen Ginsberg alongside an animated adaptation of his counter-culture epic. Starring James Franco and Todd Rotondi.

12.35 Snooker Extra. Hazel Irvine presents extended highlights of the opening semi-final of the Masters at Alexandra Palace in London.

2.35 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.30** ITV News; Weather. **11.45** Show Me the Telly. (R) **12.45 Film:** Columbo: The Murder of a Rock Star. (1991) **2.45** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.45** Regional Programme; Weather. **4.55** ITV News; Weather. **5.10 Film:** Despicable Me. (2010)

7.00 Splash! Musician Paul Young, TOWIE star Dan Osborne, comic Patrick Monahan, model Danielle Lloyd and MP Penny Mordaunt vie for the next two semi-final spots under the tutelage of Tom Daley.

8.30 Take Me Out. A PE teacher from Scunthorpe, a farmer from Inverness, a Birmingham student and a Team GB taekwondo athlete try to win a date with one of 30 single women. Paddy McGuinness presents.

9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined by comedian and actor Russell Brand, X Factor host Dermot O'Leary, film star Goldie Hawn and musician James Blunt, who also performs in the studio.

10.45 ITV News; Weather.

11.00 Film: Burn After Reading. (2008) Two gym employees gain possession of the manuscript for a CIA agent's tell-all book and try to sell the secrets it contains. Coen brothers comedy, with Brad Pitt and George Clooney.

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Ladette to Lady: Australia. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The American Football Show: Road to the Super Bowl. (R) **7.05** Trans World Sport. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Taste. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.35** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.05 Channel 4 News.

6.30 Speed with Guy Martin. For his second adrenaline-fuelled challenge, the racer tries to set the world record for riding a motorcycle on water, with the help of a Cambridge professor and marine engineers. (R)

7.30 Britain's Killer Storms. Feature-length documentary-drama telling the story of five major storms that battered the nation during 2012, hearing from people who survived them. (R)

9.00 Hostages. When Ellen disobeys Duncan's orders, he threatens to kill a member of her family and the surgeon realises she cannot trust anyone – not even those employed to protect the president.

10.00 Film: Knowing. (2009) An astrophysicist decodes a page of numbers revealing the dates of a series of disasters and tries to prevent them happening. Mystery thriller, starring Nicolas Cage and Rose Byrne.

12.20 Film: Panic Room. (2002) **2.15** Southland. (R) **3.00** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.05** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Power Rangers: Megaforce. **10.45** Slugterra. (R) **11.10** Access. **11.20** Celebrity Big Brother: Live Eviction. (R) **12.40** World's Worst Holiday Horrors. (R) **1.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.45 Film:** Columbo: Murder Under Glass. (1978) **4.10** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **5.10** Diagnosis Murder. (R)

6.10 Mr & Mrs Murder.

7.00 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. A student falls to her death. (R)

7.45 NCIS. The team investigates the death of a lance corporal, whose body has been found in an empty house, and makes a startling discovery regarding the man's personal life. (R)

8.40 NCIS. Kidnappers strike on Halloween, wounding a marine sergeant and snatching his daughter, while Abby surprises everyone by turning up at the lab in a revealing fancy-dress costume. (R)

9.35 5 News Weekend.

9.45 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous residents' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, including a second chance to see Friday's eviction.

10.45 Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Psych. Psychological analysis of the housemates' behaviour.

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.05** Baby Face Brides. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes: Revenge of the Fifth **7.15** Top Gear **8.20 Film:** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005) **10.30** Russell Howard's Good News **11.00** Family Guy

BBC Four
7.00 Wild China **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Slade at the BBC

ITV2
2.00 Film: The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (2005) **4.20** You've Been Framed! **6.50 Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **9.00 Film:** The World Is Not Enough (1999) **11.35** The Magaluf Weekender

ITV3
2.45 Film: The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **4.40** Inspector Morse **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **11.00** Prime Suspect

ITV4
3.10 Film: The Cimarron Kid (1952) **4.55 Film:** Horizons West (1952) **6.35 Film:** The Horse Soldiers (1959) **9.00 Film:** Memphis Belle (1990) Second World War drama, starring Matthew Modine. **11.10 Film:** The Howling (1981)

E4
3.30 Film: Dragonball Evolution (2009) **5.10** Rude(ish) Tube **6.05** How I Met Your Mother **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00 Film:** Top Gun (1986) **11.10** The Big Bang Theory

Film4
2.45 Nacho Libre (2006) **4.35** Bugsy Malone (1976) **6.25** Stardust (2007) Fantasy adventure, starring Charlie Cox and Claire Danes. **9.00** Runaway Jury (2003) **11.30** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 19.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Phillip Schofield

Dancing on Ice
ITV, 6.15pm
The atmosphere between Hollyoaks actress Jorgie Porter and her professional partner Sylvain Longchambon may have seemed rather icy, but it was still a shock to see the 2012 runner-up become the first celebrity to be voted off the show. Judge Jason Gardiner and the voting public have made it clear that the celebs won't be able to glide through on their past glories, but who will impress this week,? At least hosts Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley will be on hand to give the unlucky couple a consoling hug on what has been dubbed the "kiss and cry" step.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Moving On. (R) **2.00** Bargain Hunt. **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.45** Lifeline. **3.55** Songs of Praise. **4.30** Hidden Kingdoms. (R) **5.30** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Fake or Fortune? New series. Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould investigate potentially valuable works of art, helping a man who believes he owns a painting by French post-impressionist Edouard Vuillard.

7.00 Countryfile Winter Special. The team explores the countryside during winter, searching for hardy wildlife, revealing how farmers cope and unveiling a sculpture by landscape artist Andy Goldsworthy.

8.00 Call the Midwife. New series. The nuns and midwives move into their new premises, Jenny is concerned about a patient's mental state and Chummy struggles to adjust to life as a housewife and mother.

9.00 The Musketeers. New series. Swashbuckling adventure set in 17th-century Paris.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2. Including highlights of Chelsea v Manchester United.

11.25 The Revolution Will Be Televised.

11.55 Film: Shifty. (2008) Drama, starring Riz Ahmed.

1.20 Weatherview. **1.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.45 Film:** Blessed. (2008) Drama, starring James Nesbitt. **8.05** Monty Don's French Gardens. (R) **9.05** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **12.30** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **1.30** Live Snooker: The Masters. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the opening eight frames of the final from Alexandra Palace, London, where the best-of-19-frames match takes place. Subsequent programmes subject to change. **5.15** Ski Sunday. The first semi-final from Alexandra Palace, London.

6.00 Flog It! From Derby. (R)

7.00 Live Snooker: The Masters. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the second semi-final from Alexandra Palace, London, where the line-up for the final will be confirmed. Third seed Mark Selby prevailed over 12th seed Graeme Dott with a 6-5 victory in last year's concluding semi-final, earning him a chance to claim the title in a contest against Neil Robertson. With commentary by Dennis Taylor, Ken Doherty, Stephen Hendry and John Virgo, and analysis by Steve Davis and John Parrott. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

11.00 Film: A Serious Man. (2009) A mild-mannered professor seeks spiritual advice as a series of disasters disrupts his life. The Coen brothers' 1960s-set black comedy, starring Michael Stuhlbarg and Richard Kind.

12.40 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.35** Holby City. (R) **2.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **11.20** ITV News; Weather. **11.30** Inside the National Trust. **12.25** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **1.25** Catchphrase. (R) **2.10** Splash! (R) **3.40 Film:** Dr No. (1962) **5.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice. Having progressed from the first round of performances, the 10 remaining celebrity skaters now go head to head on the ice. Presented by Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With Birds of a Feather star Lesley Joseph and comedian Stephen K Amos.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. One celebrity hangs up their skates for good.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. New series. Lady Mae's husband arrives unexpectedly in London.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 Birds of a Feather. Sharon makes a discovery in the loft. (R)

10.45 Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Neil Morrissey. The actor discusses some revealing topics. (R)

11.45 River Monsters. Jeremy Wade investigates the alligator gar fish in Texas. (R)

12.10 The Store. **2.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **3.40** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 The Treacle People. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.05** Snowdon Race. **8.00** Will & Grace. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** How I Met Your Mother. **1.00** How I Met Your Mother. **1.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.55** The Simpsons. (R) **3.25** The Simpsons. (R) **3.55 Film:** Honey, I Shrunk the Kids. (1989) **5.45** Deal or No Deal.

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. Actress Sienna Miller shares her recipe for Tuscan duck ragu, Jamie Oliver cooks a whole salmon in salt and Jimmy Doherty creates a DIY hog roast for the ultimate crackling. (R)

8.00 Speed with Guy Martin. The racing fan builds a prototype toboggan and heads to the Pyrenees, where he attempts to break the record for the world's fastest gravity-powered sled. Last in the series.

9.00 Don't Look Down. The death-defying new craze of urban free-climbing, where daredevils scale cranes and buildings without safety equipment and hang hundreds of feet above the ground.

10.00 Film: Haywire. (2011) Premiere. Action thriller, starring Gina Carano.

11.45 Film: Domino. (2005) Thriller, starring Keira Knightley and Mickey Rourke.

1.55 Southland. (R) **2.40 Film:** Internal Affairs. (1990) **4.30** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **5.25** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **5.30** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.05** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Slugterra. (R) **11.00** Highland Emergency. (R) **11.30** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **12.30 Film:** The In-Laws. (2003) **2.25 Film:** Something's Gotta Give. (2003) **4.55 Film:** Sweet Home Alabama. (2002)

7.00 Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) Comedy, with Reese Witherspoon and Luke Wilson. Edited for language.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The remaining housemates embark on their final week.

10.00 Film: The Lake House. (2006) Romantic fantasy, starring Sandra Bullock.

11.55 Autopsy: Whitney Houston's Last Hours. Dr Richard Shepherd investigates the death of the singer in February 2012. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.05** Living with ADHD: Louis Smith. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes: Revenge of the Fifth **7.15** The Voice UK **8.35 Film:** Monsters vs Aliens (2009) **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** Uncle **11.15** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 The Man Who Discovered Egypt **8.00** Hidden Histories: Britain's Oldest Family Businesses **9.00 Film:** Point Blank (1967) **10.30** Me and Me Dad: A Portrait of John Boorman **11.20** Nelson's Caribbean Hell-Hole: An Eighteenth Century Navy Graveyard Uncovered

ITV2
3.10 Film: Free Willy (1993) **5.30 Film:** The Perfect Storm (2000) **8.00** You've Been Framed and Famous! **9.00** The Magaluf Weekender **10.00 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006)

ITV3
2.45 Film: Columbo: Negative Reaction (1974) **4.40** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.45** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00 Film:** Ray (2004) Biopic, starring Jamie Foxx.

ITV4
3.15 Film: Captain Newman MD (1964) **5.45 Film:** Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **8.00** Dirty Britain **9.00 Film:** Kull the Conqueror (1997) **11.00** Hell on Wheels **11.55 Film:** The Big Lebowski (1998)

E4
4.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **5.00** The Tomorrow People **6.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** Big Momma's House (2000) **10.00** Rude Tube **11.00** The Big Bang Theory **11.30** How I Met Your Mother

Film4
3.00 The Producers (1968) **4.45** The Jewel of the Nile (1985) **6.50** Step Up 3 (2010) **9.00** The Sentinel (2006) **11.10** MacGruber (2010)

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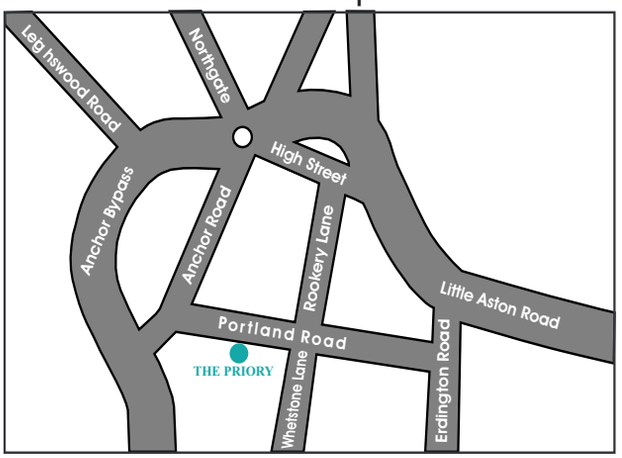

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NHS

What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY
Accepted, ITV, 10.35pm
A high-school student denied a place at any of his chosen colleges resolves to set up an educational institution of his own in collaboration with slacker friends. The ingenious misfits go to great lengths to convince their parents of the college's authenticity, despite its unorthodox curriculum. Comedy, starring Justin Long, Jonah Hill and Adam Herschman. (2006)

TUESDAY
White Mischief, BBC1, 11.55pm
An aristocratic English couple move to Kenya as Europe plunges into the Second World War, and join a colony of other bored and bitter expats leading a hedonistic life of sex and drugs. The wife soon gets into the swing of things by having an affair, but when her lover is murdered her husband becomes the prime suspect. Fact-based drama, starring Charles Dance. (1987)

WEDNESDAY
Color of Night, BBC1, 12am
A psychiatrist takes over a murdered colleague's therapy group in LA, hoping to flush out the killer. However, his judgement becomes clouded when he breaches professional ethics and begins a torrid affair with an enigmatic woman – and discovers a psychopath is out to get him. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis. (1994)

Accepted, Monday, ITV, 10.35pm

THURSDAY
Carnal Innocence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
World-famous musician Caroline Waverly moves back to her quiet home town, hoping to establish a simpler life. However, her return coincides with a spate of killings, and as rumours spread that a serial killer is on the loose, she begins to worry she may be the next victim. Thriller based on Nora Roberts' novel, starring Gabrielle Anwar and Colin Egglesfield. (2011)

FRIDAY
Saw III, Channel 4, 11.35pm
Gruesome killer Jigsaw returns for one final deadly game with some more unsuspecting victims. Weakened by his terminal illness, the menacing criminal draws on his protegee's help to kidnap a doctor, whom Jigsaw needs to keep him alive long enough to witness his final gory adventure. Horror sequel, with Tobin Bell. (2006)

Thirst, Channel 4, 1.35am
A selfless priest devotes his life to helping the patients at a hospital. When doctors working on a vaccine for a deadly virus need a human guinea pig, he volunteers – but the procedure goes wrong, and he is turned into a vampire with an unquenchable desire for blood and sex. Horror, starring Kang-ho Song. (2009)

Pick of the Week

Peter hopes for a novel success in his new role

All for one, and one for all – BBC1's latest costume drama has a familiar ring to it.

However, don't expect this 10-part drama to be a slavish adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's classic novel – the Beeb describes it as being 'inspired by' the book instead, so we're guessing it will be more slick, sexy and glamorous, and punctuated by jaw-dropping special effects and stunts.

While most of the corporation's lavish period pieces do well in the ratings, this one may benefit from a few extra viewers tuning in to see Peter Capaldi in action.

The last time he was on telly, he'd just regenerated as the new lead in Doctor Who, and you can bet that some of the millions who tuned into that will watch The Musketeers to find out how their new hero gets on here.

The Scottish star is playing an altogether different role, however – he won't be saving the universe; instead, he'll be making lives a misery.

Capaldi plays Cardinal Richelieu, the arch enemy of Musketeers Athos, Porthos and Aramis and their young friend d'Artagnan.

"Cardinal Richelieu is protector and confidant of the king as well as being essentially the first minister of France," says Capaldi of his alter ego. "He runs the country. He is a military figure as well as a religious and political one. He has a network of spies and operates like an illegal secret service to pursue his ends. He is by nature Machiavellian."

Sounds exciting. However, the actor is the first to admit that although playing Richelieu was intriguing, he wouldn't have liked to have been around in the 17th century: "I would have enjoyed the frocks, and certainly some of the food would have been appealing, but the disease and hygiene would have worried me. I certainly would have missed the NHS!"

Some of the cast and crew needed medical help during filming.

"The production suffered from a lot of injuries: dislocated shoulders, bruised shins, the odd concussion," reveals Capaldi. "It's one of the occupational hazards of being a swashbuckler."

He came a cropper himself while shooting a scene in which Richelieu threw Milady, played by actress Maimie McCoy, against a wall.

"I felt a jab of pain," he says. "And when the director said 'cut' I looked down and saw my thumb was on the wrong way round. Nasty. Instinct took over and I shoved it back, which made my eyes water and my knees weak.

"The lesson clearly was, never get into a fight with Maimie McCoy..."

The first episode introduces the central characters, played by Tom Burke, Santiago Cabrera, Howard Charles and Luke Pasqualino, and focuses on what happens when d'Artagnan leaves his rural home and makes his way to Paris to petition the king.

However, his visit looks set to end in disaster when a loved one is murdered as Richelieu and the beautiful but dangerous Milady work together to further their villainous ambitions...

Peter Capaldi stars in The Musketeers, Sunday, BBC1, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
Helix
Channel 5, 10pm
In the world of science fiction, Ronald D Moore is almost royalty thanks to his work on such shows as Star Trek: The Next Generation and Battlestar Galactica. He's also the driving force behind this new, 13-part thriller about a team of scientists from the Centres for Disease Control, who travel to the Arctic Circle to investigate a rumour involving dangerous experiments and the outbreak of a deadly new virus. Heading the team is Dr Alan Farragut, played by Billy Campbell, who was last seen in the US version of The Killing. He not only has to deal with a potential threat to life on Earth, but also his feelings for his ex-wife, a biologist joining him on the expedition.

TUESDAY
Death in Paradise
BBC1, 9pm
With its blue skies and sandy shores, Saint Marie is heaven on Earth. And at least (some of) the dead bodies in this week's show are meant to be there as a zombie film is being shot on the island. However, when one ill-fated stand-in shuffles off this mortal coil, Humphrey (Kris Marshall) and company have to investigate the murder. Apparently the cause of death is poison, but more mysterious is the motivation: who would want to kill a humble stand-in who had only spent a week on the island? Was the film's lead actress, Lexi Cunningham (Michelle Ryan), actually the intended victim in a plan that went pear-shaped?

Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
ITV, 9pm
Comedian and erstwhile drag entertainer Paul O'Grady may be known for his cutting humour and over-the-top personality, but viewers of his many documentaries will be familiar with a softer side to the comic. That's a trait he displays here to the full as he spends time in Africa helping to hand-rear orphaned animals. He first visits a cheetah sanctuary, where he gets close to a litter of six adorable cubs, and then an animal rehabilitation centre to meet a young black rhino whose mother was shot and killed. Naturally, these pint-sized critters help crank up the 'aww'-factor, but the show has a serious side, too – can the animals be taught to survive before being released into the wild?

WEDNESDAY
The National Television Awards 2014
ITV, 7.30pm
What makes this awards ceremony mean so much to actors, producers, directors and writers – each category is voted for by fans, the people who actually watch their programmes and make them either hits or flops. This year, prizes will be given out in such categories as Talent Show, Factual Entertainment, Drama, Serial Drama, Documentaries and Entertainment Presenter, but there's a new kid on the block too – TV Detective. Dermot O'Leary presents the shindig live from The O2 in London.

The National Television Awards 2014, Wednesday, ITV, 7.30pm

Russia on Four Wheels
BBC2, 9.30pm
Anita Rani and Justin Rowlatt are fast becoming one of the BBC's most durable double acts. Two years ago they joined forces on India on Four Wheels, in which they took a road trip around the country. Their next collaboration involved a trip to China. Now they're off to Russia, to find out how life has changed there in the 25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Both presenters begin their journeys in Sochi, home of the forthcoming Winter Olympics. Anita will concentrate on 'new Russia' by meeting westernised entrepreneurs and rebellious youths.

THURSDAY
Hidden Kingdoms
BBC1, 8pm
Anyone with kids might begin to suspect they're part tree shrew after watching this edition of the nature documentary – the creature possesses super-fast metabolism, which means it is never not hungry, so is always on the look-out for food. Unfortunately for the tiny rodents, they face all manner of peril as they try to find a feed, including fire ants, giant snakes and even a carnivorous plant. Here, Stephen Fry narrates footage of a young tree shrew in Borneo as it darts through the rainforest, before describing how a chipmunk collecting acorns for winter has his store cupboards raided by a neighbour.

Botched Up Bodies
Channel 5, 10pm
You might want to make sure you've long since eaten your dinner before settling down, as this series, which isn't for the faint of heart, wraps up tonight. The programme tells Claire Hawker's story. Her breasts were left horrifically scarred after a cut-price boob job in Prague went wrong. All hopes are now pinned on cosmetic surgeon Nick Percival to rectify the damage. Meanwhile, Michael Avola's six attempted hair transplants have left him severely scarred, £7,000 out of pocket and still bald.

FRIDAY
Room 101
BBC1, 8.30pm
Man Down's Roisin Conaty, Pointless star Richard Osman, and beloved broadcaster Joan Bakewell hope to convince host Frank Skinner that their list of loathed subjects is banished for the first of a new run. The inaugural category is Nature, and Joan gets to pitch her first choice. "Gardening is housework out of doors. There's no difference," she explains. Joan also raises the good point that housework indoors has been streamlined, but the fact you have to get on your knees in the garden on rubber mats that don't protect your knees, and with all the tools that go with it, it is quite rightly hard work.

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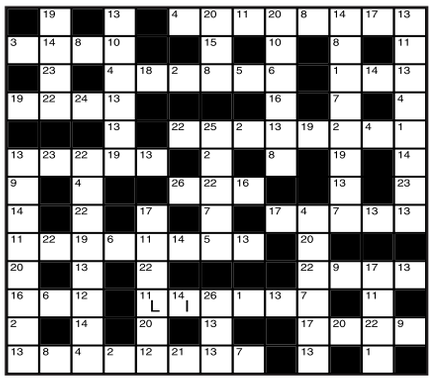
Puzzler

Brain Gym No.256

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



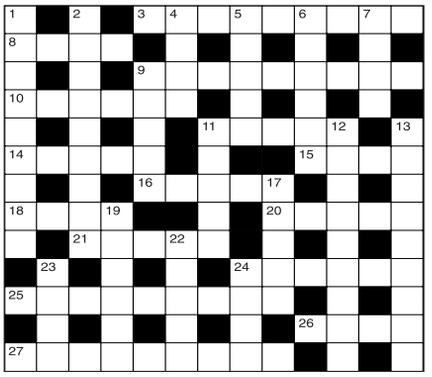
1	14 I
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11 L	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B	O	C	M	I	N	W	K	G	F	R	X	V
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	U	Y	D	T	L	E	Z	S	H	A	P	Q

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

3. Playfellow? (9)
8 & 23 Dn. Where you'll find the times are changing? (4-4)
9. Dominating - like a school replete with teachers? (9)
10. This may hold the wine for a trades-man, we hear (6)
11. He is involved in a dubious act (5)
14. There will be a time-lag if this is too slow (5)
15. Record part of the scale (4)
16. Part of the score a choir manage to achieve (5)
18. A curse the witness may be under (4)
20. Superfluous letter disclosed to the public (5)
21. Ground with unlimited space all round (5)
24. Natural tendency to make a great effort (6)
25. Exactly locates the golfer's target with compass directions! (3-6)
26. Look over southern vessel (4)
27. Bringing about a lowering of French classification (9)

Down

1. Cane out! I'd change what goes on in school! (9)
2. Deadlock produced by a companion out of condition (9)
4. Bring up right close to a sound receiver (4)
5. This will provide a light competitive encounter (5)
6. Painting in brown material is checked (6)
7. The ego is trodden underfoot, we hear (4)
9. A key for the army officer (5)
11. Violent impact producing commercial failure (5)
12. Patience that gives a certain range of latitude (9)
13. This clue is appropriate to the subject (9)
17. They entertain the crowds (5)
19. Basket to prove an obstacle to progress (6)
22. Made an effort, but produced an irritating effect (5)
23. See 8 Across
24. Weapon used in the closest engagements (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

3. Competent (9)
8. Spike (4)
9. Total (9)
10. Stupid (6)
11. Dreads (5)
14. Scope (5)
15. Resound (4)
16. Rigid (5)
18. Hints (4)
20. Abundant (5)
21. Fop (5)
24. Lament (6)
25. Trivial (9)
26. Greet (4)
27. Dispirited (9)

Down

1. Wrong (9)
2. Swollen (9)
4. Impel (4)
5. Big (5)
6. Number (6)
7. Consumes (4)
9. Donkeys (5)
11. Supernatural being (5)
12. Reluctant to believe (9)
13. Anticipate (9)
17. Drops (5)
19. Tray (6)
22. Blunts (5)
23. Rid (4)
24. Unsullied (4)

Sudoku

	4				1		8	
9		3	6					1
			7	8		4		
	2			3		5	6	
	9	4			2	1	7	
	6	8		7			3	
		1		2	7			6
	7				5	3		2
			9					

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	6	1	3	2	4	7	8	5
8	5	7	6	1	9	4	2	3
3	2	4	8	7	5	9	6	1
6	8	3	1	4	2	5	9	7
1	7	2	5	9	3	6	4	8
5	4	9	7	8	6	3	1	2
4	1	8	9	5	7	2	3	6
7	9	6	2	3	8	1	5	4
2	3	5	4	6	1	8	7	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Fact; 3 Lavender; 8 Airs; 9 Contempt; 11 Reinvestment; 13 Cheers; 14 Clothe; 17 Treating with; 20 Couriers; 21 Spar; 22 Dredging; 23 Arid. Down: 1 Flat-race; 2 Carmine; 4 Arouse; 5 Entomology; 6 Demon; 7 Rate; 10 Overlaying; 12 Tethered; 15 Tripper; 16 Citron; 18 Route; 19 Aced. QUICK - Across: 1 Cove; 3 Penchant; 8 Note; 9 Standard; 11 Inconsistent; 13 Canopy; 14 Stupor; 17 Discourteous; 20 Initiate; 21 Weir; 22 Extended; 23 Edge. Down: 1 Convince; 2 Vatican; 4 Entail; 5 Constitute; 6 Again; 7 Tidy; 10 Inspection; 12 Preserve; 15 Proceed; 16 Subtle; 18 Idiot; 19 Rife.

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Property

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The property in Selsdon Road is centrally heated and partially double glazed and the accommodation includes entrance porch with access to ground floor WC, lounge, separate dining room and kitchen with access to under-stairs pantry.

To the first floor there are three bedrooms and a bathroom.

Externally there is a mainly lawned rear garden with decked seating area and off-road parking to the front giving access to the side garage.

Viewing is highly recommended to fully appreciate this detached family residence.

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- Dining kitchen ● Guest wc ● Energy Rating TBC
- Three bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Double glazing ● Gas central heating ● Driveway ● Garden

£138,000

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COPPICE FARM
SANDALWOOD CLOSE

- Excellent extended modern link detached property
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- Four bedrooms ● Refitted bathroom
- Rear garden ● Double glazing ● Gas central heating
- Garage and driveway ● No chain ● Energy Rating D

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WILLENHALL
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WILLENHALL
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- Superb completely renovated modern style semi detached
- Spacious lounge ● Impressive refitted kitchen ● Energy D
- Three excellent bedrooms ● Luxury refitted bathroom
- Double glazing ● Gas central heating system
- Garage and driveway ● Rear garden ●No chain

£142,500

WILLENHALL
SANDRINGHAM DRIVE

- Traditional style semi detached ● Popular location
- Lounge and dining room ● Kitchen
- Three bedrooms ● Bathroom ● Energy rating TBC
- Majority double glazing ● Part gas central heating
- Driveway ● Rear gardens ● No chain

£132,500

WILLENHALL
BIRCH COPPICE GARDENS

- Three Bedroom Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms ● Gas C/Heating
- UPVC D/Glazing ● Spacious Lounge
- Rear & Side Gardens ● EPC Rating 'E'
- Conservatory & Laundry Room ● Garage & Parking

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COPPICE FARM
SANDALWOOD CLOSE

- Improved Semi Detached ● Energy Rating 'D'
- Lounge ● Re-Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Two Bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating ● Double Glazing
- Garage ● Drive ● Pleasant Rear Gardens

£129,500

COUNTY BRIDGE
SOMERSET ROAD

- Impressive Extended Semi Detached Property in Popular Location
- Lounge and Sitting room ● Dining kitchen ● Energy Rating E
- Three bedrooms ● Refitted bathroom
- Pleasant rear gardens ● Block paved driveway
- Double glazing ● Gas central heating

£129,950

WILLENHALL
TRENTHAM AVENUE

- Much improved semi detached property
- 19ft through lounge/dining room ● Refitted kitchen & utility
- Two double bedrooms ● Refitted bathroom
- Gas central heating ● Double glazing ● Energy Rating E
- Rear gardens ● Garage and driveway ● No chain

£117,000

WILLENHALL
HARPER STREET

- Superb End Town House ● Popular Location ● No Chain
- Lounge ● Fitted Kitchen ● Energy Rating 'D'
- Two Double Bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating ● Double Glazing
- Pleasant Rear Gardens ● Allocated Parking

£99,950

WILLENHALL
RAVENSBOURNE GROVE

- Modern style mid terraced property ● No Chain
- Lounge ● Dining kitchen ● Energy Rating C
- Two bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Gas central heating ● Popular cul-de-sac location
- Allocated parking space ● Rear garden

£99,950

BEACON ESTATE
MOORE ROAD

- Traditional style semi detached property in popular estate
- Lounge and dining room ● Kitchen and lobby with wc
- Two double bedrooms ●Shower room
- Double glazing ● Gas central heating
- Rear gardens ● No chain ● Energy tbc

£95,000

WILLENHALL
CLEVELAND CLOSE

- Semi detached property
- Lounge ● Dining kitchen
- Three bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Double glazing ● Ground floor wc
- Rear gardens ● No chain ● Energy rating TBC

£79,950

WILLENHALL
STONEHOUSE AVENUE

- Modern Style Detached ● Requires Modernisation
- Popular Cul-De-Sac Location ● No Upward Chain
- Lounge ● Dining Kitchen ● Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms ● Shower Room ● Energy Rating D
- Garage & Drive ● Pleasant Rear Gardens

£135,000

WLLENHALL
BINBROOK ROAD (OFF STROUD AV)

- Modern Style Semi Detached ● No Chain
- Lounge ● Dining Kitchen ● Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating System ● Double Glazing
- Garage ● Drive ● Rear garden ● Energy Rating C

£124,950

WILLENHALL
GRANBOURNE ROAD

- Modern Style Semi Detached Property ● Energy Rating D
- Lounge ● Dining Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms ● Re-Fitted Bathroom ● Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating ● Enclosed Rear Gardens
- Block Paved Driveway ● Detached Garage

£124,950

SHORT HEATH
WALKERS FOLD

- Modern Mid Terrace in Popular Location
- Lounge with Dining Area ● Fitted Kitchen
- Two Double Bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating ● Double Glazing
- Driveway ● Rear Gardens ● Energy rating C

£109,950

NEW INVENTION
WYCHBOLD CLOSE

- Modern Style End Town House ● ENERGY RATING 'D'
- Three Good Size Bedrooms ● Family Bathroom
- Lounge ● 18ft Refitted Dining Kitchen/Diner
- Upvc Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating System
- Enclosed Rear Garden ● Communal Parking

£107,000

WILLENHALL
VICTORIA STREET

- Much Improved Period Mid Terrace
- Three Bedrooms
- 2 Receptions ● Newly Fitted Kitchen ● Re Fitted Bathroom
- Double Glazing and Gas CH
- No Chain ● Energy 'D'

£87,500

SHORT HEATH
POOLES LANE

- Well Appointed Individual Detached Residence
- Hall with WC, Large Lounge with Dining Area ● Re-Fitted Kitchen
- Three Double Bedrooms ● Superb Luxury Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing ● Garage
- Delightful Extensive Rear Gardens ● Energy Rating 'D'

£185,000

BENTLEY
SILVERSTONE CLOSE

- Detached Property in Cul De Sac Location ● No Upward Chain
- Four Bedrooms ● Bathroom ● Energy Rating 'D'
- Three Reception Rooms ● Fitted Kitchen
- Gas Central Heating ● Double Glazing
- Garage ● Driveway ● Rear Garden

£154,950

WILLENHALL
ALBION ROAD

- Spacious Period Mid Terrace Property ● Convenient Location
- Lounge ● Dining Room ● Large Impressive Dining Kitchen
- Two Bedrooms ● Large Re-Fitted Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Rear Gardens ● Energy Rating 'D'

£89,950

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LOT TBC

Borneo Street Walsall

Viewing: 16th & 21st January at 11.30

This traditional end terraced residence has undergone some improvement to include double glazing and central heating but still offers scope for further improvement. Situated in the popular Butts area the well planned accommodation comprises:- Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Dining Room, Lounge, Rear Lobby, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Small Fore Garden, Yard with outbuildings, garden beyond. EPC Rating E.

GUIDE PRICE £65,000 - £75,000

LOT TBC

Oakwood Road Walsall

Viewing: 16th & 21st January at 12.00

Traditionally styled semi detached property in need of complete modernisation and improvement making an ideal purchase for a builder or investor. The property comprises:- Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Shower Room (no fittings), Lobby, Extension, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom (no fittings), Fore and Rear Gardens. EPC Rating TBC

GUIDE PRICE £30,000 - £40,000

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WWW.AUCTIONHOUSE.UK.NET/BIRMINGHAM

LOT SOLD

Sutton Road Walsall

A traditionally styled detached family residence set in a delightful semi rural location with views across Green Belt. In need of some improvements the property offers an ideal opportunity for future development and extensions. A planning application has been made Ref 13/1304/FL (decision pending shortly) to extend the property to create a larger Kitchen, Utility Room and W.C at ground floor level and an additional Bedroom, plus 3 en suite Shower Rooms at first floor level. The existing accommodation comprises: Reception Hall, Dining Room, Living Room, Kitchen, Rear Lobby, Large Utility/Veranda, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage, Fore and Rear Garden.

GUIDE PRICE £200,000 - £220,000

LOT TBC

Dash Grove Stoke-On-Trent

Viewing: Strictly by appointment

●CASH OFFERS ONLY● A well presented double glazed and centrally heated two bedroom town house situated in a popular location close to local amenities and within easy access of Hanley City Centre and the A500 D Road and the Potteries towns. The accommodation comprises: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Separate W.C., Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens. EPC Rating C.

GUIDE PRICE £55,000 - £65,000

LOT TBC

Spring Street Halesowen

Viewing: 15th & 24th January at 10.30am

A traditionally styled Victorian mid terrace property which has double glazing and central heating (not tested) making an ideal purchase for a first time buyer or investor. Conveniently located, the property comprises:- Front Living Room, Lobby, Dining Room, Rear Lobby, Kitchen, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms, Additional Room, Enclosed Yard with Garden beyond. EPC Rating E

GUIDE PRICE £65,000 - £70,000

LOT TBC

Barns Lane Walsall

Viewing: 16th & 21st January at 12.30

Situated in a popular residential area this 1960's semi detached property has gas fired central heating and uPVC double glazing (some ground floor units are broken). Offering tremendous scope for further improvement the extended accommodation is conveniently located and has open aspect to rear. The property comprises: Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Breakfast Room, W.C., Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens. EPC Rating TBC.

GUIDE PRICE £80,000 - £90,000

LOT TBC

Walhouse Road Walsall

Viewing: 16th & 21st January at 10.30

A traditionally styled part double glazed semi detached residence set on a prominent corner plot lending itself to extensions (subject to planning approval). In need of some improvement the property offers tremendous scope and needs to be viewed to be appreciated. Set back from the road behind a fore and side garden the property comprises: Fully Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Dining Room, Lounge, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens. EPC Rating G.

GUIDE PRICE £100,000 - £120,000

LOT SOLD

Weston Street Walsall

A Victorian 2 bed mid terraced residence with central heating offering an ideal opportunity for a first time buyer or investor, conveniently located in a popular residential area. The property comprises: Reception Hall, Dining Room, Lounge, Kitchen, Lobby, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms, Yard, Rear Garden.

GUIDE PRICE £50,000 - £60,000

LOT SOLD

Beacon Street Walsall

A traditionally styled Victorian end of terrace residence has gas fired central heating and uPVC double glazing but require further improvement and modernisation ideally suited to the needs of a first time buyer or investor. Constructed of brick under a pitch tiled roof the property is set back from the road behind a small fore garden and comprises:- Lounge/Dining Room, Hallway Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Shower Room, Fore and Rear Gardens.

GUIDE PRICE £50,000 - £60,000

LOT TBC

Princes Avenue Walsall

Viewing: 16th & 21st January at 10am

Occupying a delightful location just off Broadway North, this traditionally styled semi detached property offers much extended gas centrally heated and double glazed accommodation set over three floors. Internal viewing is recommended to appreciate the following accommodation:- Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Dining Room, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Garden Room, Four Bedrooms, Bathroom, Large Attic Room, Garage, Driveway, Rear Garden. EPC Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £130,000 - £150,000

LOT TBC

Calthorpe Road Walsall

Viewing: 15th & 24th January at 12pm

This spacious detached property is situated in one of south Walsall most sought after locations. The property requires certain modernisation but offers tremendous potential for improvement and extension (subject to planning). With gas central heating and upvc double glazing the property includes: Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Garage, Three Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Delightful Fore And Rear Gardens. EPC Rating E.

GUIDE PRICE £190,000 - £210,000

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Stafford Road
BLOXWICH

- Extended Five Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen
- Laundry Room
- Shower Room
- Annex with Kitchen
- Lounge
- Garage & Parking
- Large Rear Garden

In the Region of £439,950

The Green
BLOXWICH

- Five Bedroom Detached
- Newly Built
- Lounge & Separate Sitting Room
- Open Plan Living Area
- Fitted Kitchen with Appliances
- Utility
- Guest Cloakroom W.C.
- Double Garage with Off Road Parking
- Front & Rear Gardens

Asking price £365,045

Lichfield Road
BLOXWICH

- Extended Four Bedroom Detached
- Immaculate Presentation
- Extensive Rear Garden
- Driveway
- Off Road Parking and Garage
- D.Glazing & Gas

In the Region of £349,950

The Green
BLOXWICH

- Four Bedroom Detached
- Newly Built
- Lounge
- Open Plan Living Area
- Fitted Kitchen with Integrated Appliances
- En-Suite
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Off Road Parking

Asking price £305,495

WALSALL
Cameron Road

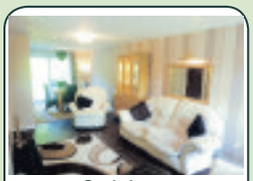
- MANAGERS SPECIAL
- Three Bedroom Detached Bungalow
- Large Open Plan Living Area
- Kitchen
- Shower Room
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Parking
- Utility Room

In the Region of £249,950

Green Rock Lane
BLOXWICH

- Three Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Corner Plot
- Kitchen with Large Pantry
- Verandah
- Newly Fitted Bathroom
- Guest W.C.
- Large Detached Garage

In the Region of £165,000



Crab Lane
WILLENHALL

- Three Bedroom Link-Detached
- Through Lounge/ Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Shower Room
- Driveway with Garage
- Double Glazing

£164,950

WILLENHALL
Grazewood Close

- THREE BEDROOM DETACHED
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Garage with Off Road Parking
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Off Road Parking

In the Region of £154,950

Harness Close
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Link-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen Diner
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Driveway
- NO CHAIN

Offers in excess of £135,000

Lane Avenue
WALSALL

- EXTENDED THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED
- Re-Furbished•Lounge/ Dining Room
- Kitchen•Guest Cloakroom W.C
- Bedroom with En-Suite Shower Room
- Bathroom•Rear Gardens and Off Road Parking

In the Region of £134,950

Cartbridge Lane
WALSALL

- TWO BEDROOM MID-TERRACE
- D.Glazing•Gas Heating
- Parking•Lounge/ Diner
- Kitchen•Cloakroom W.C
- Bathroom with Shower
- Gardens and Off Road Parking

In the Region of £127,995

Torridon Road
WILLENHALL

- Two Bedroom Bunglaow
- Lounge with Patio Doors to Rear Garden
- Kitchen
- Wet Room with Shower
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £115,000

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Coalpool Lane
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Re-Fitted Kitchen
- Guest W.C.
- Family Bathroom
- Side Room
- Large Rear Garden
- Large Driveway

In the Region of £108,500

Squires Grove
WILLENHALL

- Two Bedroom Coach House Apartment
- Large Lounge/ Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Converted Garage
- Allocated Parking
- D.Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £99,995

Queen Elizabeth Avenue
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Duplex Flat
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Shower Room
- Separate W.C.
- Utility/Rear Lobby
- Roof Terrace
- Off Road Parking

In the Region of £98,500

Hunter Crescent
BLOXWICH

- EXTENDED THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED
- D.Glazing•Gas Heating
- Lounge
- Diner•Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Gardens
- Garage•Parking

Offers in excess of £95,000

Margam Crescent
BLOXWICH

- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Breakfast Room/ Dining Room
- Family Bathroom
- Loft Room Conversion
- Rear Garden

Offers in excess of £85,000

Blakenall Lane
BLOXWICH

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Potential to Extend
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Downstairs W.C.
- Shower Room
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking
- NO CHAIN

In the Region of £85,000

Pershore Road
BLOXWICH

- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed
- Central Heating
- Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking

In the Region of £84,950

Cook Road
BLOXWICH

- CASH BUYERS ONLY
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Open Plan Lounge/ Dining Room
- Bathroom
- Separate W.C.
- Garage
- D.Glazing & Central Heating

In the Region of £80,000

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Green Lane
SHELFIELD

- Four Double Bedrooms
- Clay Block paved Driveway & Patio Area
- Two En-Suites
- Conservatory
- Family bathroom
- Guest W.C.
- Loft Room
- Close to Shelfield Acacdemy
- Garage

In the Region of £229,950

Lichfield Road
BLOXWICH

- EXTENDED THREE BEDROOM DETACHED
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen
- Utility
- Downstairs W.C,
- D.Glazing
- Gas Heating
- Family Bathroom
- Two Reception Rooms
- Separate W.C
- Garage

£225,000

Field road
BLOXWICH

- Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Re-Fitted Kitchen
- Conservatory
- Fully Re-Furbed
- Utility Room/WC
- Two Reception Rooms
- Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden

In the Region of £194,000

Woodall Street
BLOXWICH

- 5% Deposit Paid
- Fitted Kitchen
- Four Bedroom Detached
- Guest Cloakroom W.C.
- Through Lounge/ Dining Room
- Garage & Off Road Parking

Offers in excess of £185,000

Allens Lane
PELSALL

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Conservatory
- D.Glazing & Gas C.Heating
- L-Shape Extended Fitted Kitchen
- Driveway with Off Road

In the Region of £185,000

Bloxwich Road North
WILLENHALL

- LARGE THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED
- Garage
- Lounge/Dining Room,
- Kitchen
- Recently Fitted Bathroom with Shower
- D.Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking with
- Garage
- Parking

£169,950

Wolverhampton Road
BLOXWICH

- Four Bedroom Detached
- Rear Lobby/Utility
- Large Lounge
- Family Bathroom with Walk-In Shower
- Breakfast Kitchen
- Gardens
- Dining Room
- Integral Garage &

Offers in excess of £149,950

Pattenham Close
WILLENHALL

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Parking
- D. Glazing
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Gardens
- En-Suite
- Family Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £149,950

New Forest Road
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Detached
- En-Suite Shower Room
- Lounge
- Open Plan Kitchen/Diner
- Off Road Parking
- Garage with Utility
- Conservatory
- Family Bathroom

Offers in excess of £147,500

Coppice Farm Way
WILLENHALL

- Extended Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Two Reception Rooms
- Front and Rear Gardens
- Parking

In the Region of £140,000

REDUCED

Bramcote Way
RUSHALL

- Modern Three bedroom semi detached
- gas heating
- d. glazing
- Guest Cloakroom
- Lounge
- Kitchen Diner
- Bathroom
- Garden
- Garage
- Off Road Parking

£140,000

Lichfield Road
WILLENHALL

- Two Bedroom End-Terrace
- Room
- Rear Garden
- Fitted Kitchen
- Off Road Parking
- Family Bathroom
- D.Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Lounge/Dining

In the Region of £114,995

Bloxwich Road
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Traditional Semi
- Rooms
- Kitchen & Veranda
- Double Glazing
- Family Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Extensive Rear Garden
- Two Reception

Offers in excess of £110,000

Smiths Flour Mill
WALSALL

- Two Bedroom First Floor Apartment
- Shower
- Double Glazing
- Open Living Area
- Electric Heating
- Parking
- Fully Equipped Kitchen
- Family Bathroom with

In the Region of £110,000

Laburnum Grove
WILLENHALL

- THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED
- dining room
- kitchen
- gas central heating
- bathroom
- double glazing where specified
- driveway
- lounge
- garage and rear garden

£110,000

WALSALL
Ludgate Court,Camborne Road

- Two Bedroom Second Floor Apartment
- Lounge
- Breakfast Kitchen/Diner
- Newly Fitted Family Bathroom
- Communal Grounds & Garage
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region £110,000

Wolverhampton Road
WALSALL

- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Two Reception Rooms
- Gas Central Heating
- Rear Garden
- Fitted Kitchen
- No Upward Chain

In the Region of £90,000

Wolverhampton Road
WALSALL

- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- Two Reception Rooms
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Lean To
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Kitchen

In the Region of £90,000

Trent Place
BLOXWICH

- TWO BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating (both where specified)
- Through Lounge
- Further Reception/ Study
- Kitchen
- Shower Room
- Family Bathroom
- Off Road Parking

£89,950

Lewis Street
WALSALL

- Two Bedroom Terrace
- Double Glazing
- Two Reception Rooms
- Central Heating
- Bathroom
- Rear Garden

£80,000

Cartbridge Walk
WALSALL

- TWO BEDROOM END-TERRACE
- Dining Room
- Double Glazing
- Fitted Kitchen
- Gas Central Heating
- Family Bathroom
- Lounge
- Gardens and Parking

£79,950

Clarkes Lane
WILLENHALL

- TWO BEDROOM FIRST FLOOR FLAT
- double glazing
- gas central heating
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Utility Room
- Family Bathroom
- Communal Grounds
- Brick Out-Building/Storage

£70,000

Livingstone Road
BLOXWICH

- Two Bed Flat
- Heating
- Lounge
- D.Glazing
- Kitchen
- Off Road Parking
- Bathroom
- Central

£64,950

Argyll Court
WILLENHALL

- One Bedroom Ground Floor Apartment
- Shower Over
- Communal Grounds
- Secure Gated Parking
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Bathroom with

Offers in excess of £60,000

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FOR SALE

ASHMORE LAKE RD, WILLENHALL

Ground Floor Lock Up Shop/Office With Flat Above Comprising Of Retail Area, Kitchenette, Store Room, W.C. The Flat Above Comprising Of Own Access, Kitchen, Lounge, Bedroom, Bathroom, Loft Room, C/Heating, D/Glazing, Rear Parking and Detached Garage. Viewing Highly Recommended.

£119,995

FOR SALE

WEBSTER ROAD, WILLENHALL

Three Bed End Of Terrace Property Situated On A Generous Corner Plot Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Ground Floor W.C, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, C/Heating, D/Glazing, Detached Garage and Enclosed Garden. Ideal FTB Or BTL.

£89,995

FOR SALE

GRENVILLE CLOSE, BENTLEY

Well Presented One Bed First Floor Flat Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Stairs To First Floor Living Accommodation, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom, D/Glazing, Thermostatic Electric Heating, Garage And A Driveway. Close To Amenities And Transport Links. Great BTL!

£54,995

FOR SALE

PINFOLD ST, DARLASTON

One Bed Ground Floor Flat Having Entrance Porch, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Fitted Bathroom With Walk In Shower/ Bath, C/Heating, D/Glazing & Off Road Parking.

£59,995

FOR SALE

LINDEN CLOSE, BENTLEY

Two Bed Maisonette Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Inner Hallway, Modern Fitted Breakfast Kitchen, Spacious Lounge Diner, Two Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, Electric Heating, Secure Fenced Communal Area To The Rear, Great FTB Or BTL Investment.

£67,995

FOR SALE

GIPSY LANE, WILLENHALL

Three Bed Mid Terraced Property Having Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom, C/ Heating, D/Glazing. Close To Willenhall Town Centre Giving Access To Good Local Amenities, Schools and Transport Links. Great Investment Property.

£78,995

FOR SALE

REGENT ST, WILLENHALL

Well Presented Two Bed End Terraced Property Having Two Reception Rooms, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Separate Utility, Two Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/ Glazing, C/Heating, Cul-De-Sac Location. IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY.

£82,000

FOR SALE

HAWKSWELL DRIVE, WILLENHALL

Immaculately Presented One Bedroom Town House Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Lounge With Open Plan Staircase, Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom And Fitted Bathroom, D/ Glazing, C/Heating, Enclosed Garden. Great First Time Buy Or Buy To Let Investment!

£83,500

FOR SALE

SQUIRES GR, NEW INVENTION

Two Bed Modern First Floor Apartment Having Communal Entrance Hall, Private Hallway, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Master With En-Suite, Family Bathroom, Electric Heating, UPVC Double Glazing And Allocated Parking.

£89,995

FOR SALE

REGENT STREET, WILLENHALL

Two Bed Mid Terraced Property Having Two Reception Rooms, Stylish Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/ Heating And Enclosed Rear Garden. This Property Is Presented In Show Home Condition, Must Be Viewed To Fully Appreciate.

£89,995

FOR SALE

CEDAR ROAD, WILLENHALL

Two Bedroom Semi Detached Bungalow Comprising Of Hallway, Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Two Good Sized Bedrooms, Bathroom, Utility Area, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Off Road Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden, Brick Outbuilding. Viewings Recommended! No Chain!

£98,995

FOR SALE

DIBBLE CLOSE, WILLENHALL

Well Presented Three Bed Mid Town House Having Entrance Hall, Lounge, Modern Kitchen Diner, Family Bathroom, Separate W.C, C/ Heating, D/Glazing, Parking To The Rear. Ideal FTB Or Buy To Let.

£90,000 OIEO

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£114,995

FOR SALE

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FOR SALE

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£119,995

FOR SALE

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Two Bed Mid Town House Property Comprising Of Entrance Hallway, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor W.C, Lounge, Two Bedrooms, En-Suite, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Brick Bin Store, Enclosed Rear Garden And Two Allocated Parking Spaces.

£122,500

FOR SALE

SQUIRES GROVE, NEW INVENTION

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FOR SALE

JOHNSON RD, DARLASTON

Extended Three Bed End Town House Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Inner Hallway, Fitted Kitchen, Spacious Extended Lounge, Three Generous Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/ Glazing, C/Heating, Good Sized Front And Rear Gardens With Off Road Parking.

£129,999

FOR SALE

RIDING WAY, SHORT HEATH

Three Bedroom Semi Detached Property Comprising Of Porch, Entrance Hallway, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Dining Room, Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, C/ Heating, D/Glazing, Garage, Carport, Enclosed Rear Garden And Off Road Parking.

£129,995

FOR SALE

MEMORY LANE, DARLASTON

Three Bedroom Semi-Detached Property Comprising Entrance Hall, Spacious Lounge, Modern Kitchen/ Diner, Conservatory, Ground Floor W.C, Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, C/Heating, D/Glazing. Close To Good Local Amenities And Transport Links. Must View!

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£136,995

FOR SALE

WOODSIDE WAY, SHORT HEATH

Two Bedroom Semi-Detached Bungalow Comprising Entrance Hall, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Breakfast Kitchen, Two Spacious Bedrooms, Wet Room, D/Glazed, C/Heating, Enclosed Rear Garden. Close To Schools, Amenities And Good Transport Links. Viewing Highly Recommended.

£139,995

FOR SALE

ENSBURY CLOSE, WILLENHALL

Three Bed Link Detached Property Located In A Quiet Cul-De-Sac Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor W.C, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, C/Heating, D/ Glazing, Garage, Enclosed Garden, Driveway.

£142,995

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GLASTONBURY CRES, BLOXWICH

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£144,995

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UPLANDS AVENUE, WILLENHALL

Two/Three Bed Detached Bungalow Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Basement/Hobby Room, Cellar, C/Heating, D/Glazing, Detached Garage, Enclosed Rear Garden. Must View.

£144,995

FOR SALE

BEWLEY ROAD, WILLENHALL

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£147,995

FOR SALE

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Three Storey Three Bed Semi Detached Property Comprising Of Entrance Hallway, Sitting Room/ Bedroom Three, Ground Floor W.C, Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Two Double Bedrooms, En-Suite Shower Room, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/ Heating, Garage.

£153,995

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ESSINGTON RD, ESSINGTON

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£189,995

FOR SALE

WOOD LANE, SHORT HEATH

Four Bedroom Detached Property Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Further Separate Lounge/Diner, Open Plan Kitchen/Diner, Utility Area, Ground Floor W.C, Four Double Bedrooms With Built-in Wardrobes, Family Bathroom, C/ Heating, D/Glazing, Garage, Generous Rear Garden And Off Road Parking.

£249,995

TO LET

TEMPLE ROAD, WILLENHALL

Well Presented Two Bed Mid Terraced Property Comprising Of Two Reception Rooms, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Rear Hall, Modern Bathroom, Two Bedrooms, D/ Glazing, C/Heating & Enclosed Rear Garden.

£450 pcm

TO LET

WELLINGTON PLACE, WILLENHALL

Two Bed Mid Terrace Property Comprising Of Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, C/ Heating, D/Glazing And Spacious Rear Garden. Close To Fibbersley Park School. Must View!

450 PCM

TO LET

MEMORY LANE, DARLASTON

Three Bed Semi Detached House Comprising Of Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom With Separate Shower Cubicle, Playroom Currently Being Used As A Fourth Bedroom, D/Glazing, C/ Heating, Driveway, Enclosed Rear Garden.

£525 PCM

TO LET

HIGHGROVE CLOSE, NEW INVENTION

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£575 PCM

TO LET

DILLOWAYS LN, PORTOBELLO

Extended Three Bed Semi Detached Property Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Spacious Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Ground Floor W.C,Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, C/ Heating, D/Glazing, Enclosed Rear Garden. Viewings Are Very Highly Recommended.

£625 PCM

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Nissan is delivering innovation

By David Banner

COMBINING innovation and exciting technology with intelligent design, the new Qashqai will build on the success of its two-million selling predecessor.

Yet despite setting new standards for technology, comfort and practicality, the Qashqai remains accessible to buyers considering a conventional hatchback or crossover.

With prices starting from just £17,595, buyers can benefit from premium quality and some of the most advanced features on the market.

Nissan's philosophy of bringing premium features to the family car market is tried and tested. The exceptional success of the original model proves that buyers now expect Nissan to deliver sector-first innovations and fresh thinking in every key area.

The new Qashqai, on sale this month, is available in four familiar grades: Visia, Acenta, Acenta Premium and Tekna.

Pressure

Visia models, priced from £17,595, come with a range of new features including automatic air conditioning, hill start assist, a five-inch colour HD infotainment screen, chassis control, TPMS (tyre pressure monitoring system) and speed limiter/cruise control all fitted as standard.

Acenta models continue the generous theme with a further list of premium features fitted as standard.

Priced from £19,145, these include dual-zone automatic air conditioning, premium leather steering wheel and gear knob, 17-inch alloy wheels and a luggage board system. Safety equipment includes front fog lamps, auto headlamps and rain-sensing wipers. Both the Visia and Acenta models come with the option of a smart vision pack (£450) that adds Nissan's advanced safety shield system among other driver aids. Designed to enhance the safety of occupants, the pack incorporates front collision avoidance and traffic tign recognition.

Acenta Premium models start from £20,995 and feature a raft of comfort and safety technologies. These include new-generation NissanConnect infotainment system with DAB radio. A rear view camera is also fitted as standard, along with i-key start push button, parking sensors and a panoramic glass roof. Safety features include front collision avoidance, high beam assist and lane departure warning.

Range-topping Tekna models – which start from £23,145 – feature an array of new-to-sector technologies that further highlight Nissan's lead in the crossover market. For safety, Tekna models benefit from Bi-LED headlamps, Safety Shield with Traffic Signal Recognition and High Beam Assist.

Tekna models also excel when it comes to design and technology features. All models are equipped with 19-inch alloy wheels, roof rails, part-leather seats, a large glass roof, heated seatsand Intelligent key with engine start button. The latest-generation NissanConnect system is also standard, including a seven-inch touchscreen display, DAB digital radio, Around View Monitor and smartphone connectivity.

Efficient

A range of supremely efficient and refined petrol and diesel engines allows the new Qashqai to exceed the expectations of drivers no matter which powertrain is chosen. The line-up consists of four engines: two petrol and two diesel, with the option of two- or four-wheel-drive. Customers can also choose between manual and all-new Xtronic automatic transmissions.

Driving through a six-speed manual transmission, the entry-level 1.2 DIG-T delivers 115PS and generates 190Nm of torque. Despite its modest size, the 1.2-litre engine packs a real punch, offering sharper acceleration and greater flexibility than the outgoing 1.6-litre naturally aspirated engine.

Its lower weight and more fuel-efficient operation also mean it is considerably cleaner and more economical than the model it replaces. The 1.2 DIG-T engine emits 129g/km of CO (15g/km less than the outgoing 1.6-litre petrol unit), and has a fuel consumption figure of 50.4mpg.

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Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban Cycle 23.2 – 70.6 (12.2 - 4.0), Extra Urban 40.4 – 85.6 (7.0 - 3.3), Combined 32.5 - 78.5 (8.7 - 3.6). CO_2 emissions 201 - 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Models Shown: Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. **Terms and Conditions:** Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY

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Official Chevrolet fuel consumption figures Spark 1.0 LS (mpg): Urban 42.8, Extra-Urban 67.3, Combined 55.4, CO_2 119 g/km, Trax range: Urban: 34.4-52.3, Extra Urban: 51.3-70.6, Combined – 43.4-62.7. CO_2 Emissions 120-153g/km. Official EU-Regulated Test Data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style.

Models shown are a Chevrolet Spark 1.0 LS and a Chevrolet Trax 1.6 LS. Vehicles shown features metallic paint at an extra cost of £425. *Saving shown against manufacturers list price whilst stocks last. Saving based on a (trim and engine) Model Year 14 Spark and Model Year 14 Trax. Savings available on other Chevrolet models. Prices correct at time of print. Valid for retail registrations only. At participating Dealers only. Offer ends 31st March 2014.

Motoring

New Mustang muscle is here

FORD has unveiled its latest generation Mustang muscle car, which for the first time will come to the UK in right-hand drive form.

The car, which will go on sale towards the end of 2014, claims to be lighter and more advanced than its predecessor. Also new is a 2.3-litre, 305 horsepower engine, which Ford hopes will boost the Mustang's eco credentials in Europe without detracting from the car's performance. Traditionalists have nothing to fear, however, as Ford has retained the car's signature 5.0-litre V8 motor.

Although the car is a year away from appearing in the UK, current estimates put the Mustang's entry-level price at around the £30,000 mark for the four-cylinder model.

Best way to sell your car?

WE all like the thought of upgrading our cars – new or used, makes no difference. There is just something delightfully satisfying about driving away in that newly acquired machine.

Of course before most of us buy a new car, we need to sell our old one, and that can be a rather daunting experience.

So what options do we have to part with our no longer loved motor?

Perhaps selling privately might be the answer. Or maybe part exchange? And then there is the most recent of innovations the 'We want any car' type companies, which will take any drivable car off your hands in any condition for cash.

So if you are looking to sell your car, here are your options:

Selling privately

Whether this entails a 'for sale' sign in the window or an ad in the local paper, Auto Trader or online, this can sometimes be a lengthy process.

Of course, the flip side is that we can at least expect a better price selling to a member of the public. However, to achieve this, we would need to spend money on advertising and then spend time having prospective purchasers visit our home, often at inconvenient times. And then after all the bargaining is done and dusted, we still might not achieve the price we were expecting.

Advantages: Can sometimes achieve a satisfying selling price.

Disadvantages: Cost of advertising. Strangers visiting our home. The inconvenience of taking phone calls and booking appointments to view, often at inconvenient times.

Part exchange

Simply take your car along to a dealer who will then give you a price based on you purchasing a new car from him. Sounds simple and indeed it is, however simplicity comes at a price.

Often the dealer will quote you a 'price to change' which means how much you will have to give the dealer plus your car, to take delivery of your new model. The actual price paid for your car isn't always revealed.

Advantages: Quick and easy. Sell and buy at the same time.

Disadvantages: You don't always know how much you are being given for your car as the price is hidden in the deal. You don't know if you are getting the best price on the car you are purchasing. You obviously need to be in the market for a new car to make this option work for you.

The new 'We want any car' type companies

This is quite a new concept which seems to be getting ever more popular. The process is simple – you log on to www.WeWantAnyCar.com and enter the details of your car. You then get an instant value based on industry trade valuation guides. If you like the price you take your vehicle along to one of their depots where they will carry out a full on-site appraisal to ensure the car is in the condition that you claimed online.

A price is then agreed and you are given a cheque which clears in your bank within four working days. Simple!

Advantages: All done online, no personal pressure to sell. No hassle or inconvenience. There are 60 WeWantAnyCar.com branches around the UK making this option accessible nationally. Your car can be sold in minutes.

Disadvantages: Face value price might not be what you expected.

Scrapyard

Yes this is still an option, but whereas years ago you could get a fiver for your old car, today you have to pay them for taking it off your hands.

Advantages: You can dispose of it whenever you wish.

Disadvantages: It could actually cost you money.

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Finance examples based on: PCX125 & CBF125 models at cash price £2,799, SH MODE models at cash price £2,498, CBR125R models at £3,798, including all on road charges with 12 months RFL. Offer inclusive of Honda 3rd Year Guarantee extended cover. Total amount payable at CBF125: £2,799.00, CBR125R: £3,798.00, SH Mode: £2,673.72, PCX125: £3,005.88. Fuel consumption for SH mode: 29.59 m/l (133.9mpg), PCX125: 28.6 m/l (130mpg), CBF125: 35.2 m/l (158.4mpg), CBR125R: 26.9 m/l (122.6mpg), at WMTC Mode. Finance offers subject to status. Bikes subject to availability. Bikes must be registered by 31st January 2014. Terms & conditions apply.

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ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solvent, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and courteous. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151**

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101**

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408297**

HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089**

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877**

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. **Tel No: 0905 002 1952 Box No: 366019**

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943**

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859**

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. **Tel: No. 0905 002 1953 Box No: 407321**

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wining, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869**

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733**

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489**

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311**

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253**

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTM broadminded male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259**

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787**

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955**

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTM loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419**

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807**

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109**

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505**

HI I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933**

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537**

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639**

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429**

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413**

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285**

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615**

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135**

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PAUL 55, 6ft 2ins, intelligent, down to earth, kind, genuine, honest, seeks female, 50-60 for relationship, many hobbies. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409783**

DAVE 54, seeking female, 40-51 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409839**

JOHN 59, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 46-55, likes meals out and in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273**

MARK 6ft, blue eyes, slim, dark hair, honest, loving, caring, down to earth, likes sport, music, cinema, meals out, seeking special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409803**

SINGLE white 40's male, looking for strictly no strings adult fun, any age/race/looks, genuine callers. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409613**

LOCAL businessman, seeking special friend for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409585**

SAM seeking lovely lady for great times likes sports, good standard of living, looking for some fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409527**

ATTRACTIVE male, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, loving, genuine, seeks attractive female, single mum welcome, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409471**

PETE 6ft 1ins, likes body building, kick boxing, seeks female for love and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409451**

MASON single parent, seeking female for no strings fun times, 30-45. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409443**

MALE likes nights out, holidays, seeking nice female for friendship, fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409363**

GARY 40, tall, dark hair, seeks female, 30-50 for fun and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409207**

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4 Pets & Animals

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5 Business & Farming

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public & legal notices

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The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning

Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG.

Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE ORDER 2010 (AS AMENDED)

13/1629/FL
Mr Adnan Masood
FOR: Convert retail premises to hot food takeaway
AT: 230 Wednesbury Road, Walsall, WS2 9QN

13/1661/FL
Walkfern Ltd
FOR: Erection of 2 industrial buildings (Class B2).
AT: LAND AT MERCHANTS WAY, ALDRIDGE, WALSALL, WS9 8SW

*** 13/1734/FL**
Canley 5 (In administration) Ltd
FOR: Change of use from retail (use class A1) to retail warehouse/membership club (use class B8)
AT: UNITS 1-2C BESCOT CRESCENT, WALSALL, WS1 4SB
Development Affecting the Setting of a Public Footpath WAL50

13/1668/FL
Mr Rafaqat Ali
FOR: Single storey extension to rear and side of house
AT: 141 ESSEX STREET ,WALSALL, WS2 7AR

The application marked * does not accord with the provisions of the development plan for the area.

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Aldridge come out on top of the scrap

Aldridge 13 Sutton 3rds 10

ALDRIDGE were made to fight hard for their victory in this fill-in friendly fixture versus Sutton 3rds.

An attacking line-out some 20 metres out from the Sutton line became a maul which relentlessly ground its way forward putting the opposition pack in reverse.

It was halted just short but lock Eddie O'Neill grabbed possession and barrelled over to claim the touch down.

Within 10 minutes Sutton had made inroads into the deficit with an Alex Shaw penalty but mid-way through, with a penalty off flanker Ben Drinkwater and a try from winger Jacob Holding – cannoning off a couple of defenders to finish off a slick three-quarter move into the corner, it was beginning to look like being a decent afternoon out for the home side.

However, late in the half, the visitors came back strongly and with five minutes of the half remaining eventually got within striking distance of the Aldridge line.

The home side conceded a penalty, quickly taken by No 10 Ian Evans who scampered over between the posts unchallenged.

Fullback Shaw added the extras to reduce the Aldridge lead to 13-10. The play became attritional throughout the second half as both sides slugged it out to gain the upper hand.

There were opportunities but no further scores as Aldridge clung on to claim the spoils.

Youngsters earn first black belts

TWO young martial arts students from a karate club near Walsall have started the new year wearing their first black belts.

Daniel Chew, aged 11 and Ben williams, 12 both from Essington and who both attend Cheslyn Hay High School passed their exams last month.

Both boys have been training at Elite Shotokan Karate Club, which meets at Essington Community Centre, for more than five years.

The test took nearly two hours and consisted of 18 katas (routines), a set of kihon (techniques), defences against attacks including knife attacks, sparring and freestyle fighting

Chief instructor David Hill said: "This is such a fantastic achievement for the two young lads and they did me so proud."

Changes to boxing code

THE dawn of a new age for amateur boxing in England has seen what used to be the junior ABA competition begin under new rules and regulations.

A massive rebrand of the code in this country has seen the ABA renamed England Boxing and the juniors now become the England Youth Championships.

There will be a longer distance in each contest – three, two minute rounds have turned into three, threes – with the judges using a 10-point scoring system.

Three club coaches rather than two are allowed in a fighter's corner, while trainers are also permitted to speak to their charges.

Mel of a task for Pepe as the new boss

Saints 1 Albion 0

Albion

ALBION'S new boss, Pepe Mel, got to work after a first look at his team that laid bare the scale of the task ahead.

And that clarity for the Spaniard can be the only positive to have emerged from a dreadful day on the south coast.

Mel took to Twitter a couple of hours after leaving St Mary's to declare himself "excited" by the challenge of leading the Baggies into a new, uncertain era.

Privately, though, the 50-year-old must also be concerned about what he witnessed in Hampshire.

Because if this limp, toothless display was the best Albion could produce with their new gaffer sitting in the stands and waiting to be impressed, it suggested halting the steady slide towards the Premier League's bottom three will be no easy task for the former Real Betis chief.

The word from Spain suggests Mel is a charismatic figure and a positive, forward-looking coach.

On the evidence of Saturday in Southampton, he will need all his powers of motivation and inspiration to transform an uncertain, insipid Baggies team back into the confident, creative force that many performances over the last two seasons have shown they can be.

He will have taken precious little encouragement from Saturday, when it took his new charges almost a full 90 minutes to carve out the one clear-cut chance from which a horribly out-of-form Shane Long should have rescued a point that would have been as welcome as it was unwarranted.

For the remainder of the game they found themselves pegged back, unsettled by the Saints' constant hustling and unable to keep possession for more than a handful of passes. The hosts might have scored twice in the opening stages, first when captain Adam Lallana side-stepped Gareth McAuley and fired too close to Ben Foster in the Baggies goal.

Then, when the visitors failed to clear the ball from a congested goalmouth, Rickie Lambert fired just wide.

Steven Davis also sent a volley just off target for the Saints while Downing's men were restricted to a couple of opportunities that could barely be categorised as 'chances'. Steven Reid sent a powerful free-kick over the crossbar from long range before an unmarked James Morrison was unable to control a tricky, bouncing, crossfield ball from Long after a surge down the right.

Lallana exploited some woeful defending with 14 minutes remaining when he collected a fine pass from Gaston Ramirez and found himself with the freedom of the 18-yard box to pick his spot and open the scoring.

Only in the final seconds did the Baggies threaten an equaliser when Long's effort was saved.

Scoreless game stops Pics push to win seven

Rushall Olympic 0 Whitby Town 0

Football

RUSHALL Olympic just missed out on making it seven successive wins as two in-form teams played out a goalless draw.

Despite the shortage of goals this was an entertaining game where the home side dominated the first half but visiting Whitby Town came more into it during the second half and created several opportunities of their own

Pics Manager, Neil Kitching, was forced into just the one change from the team that had won at Buxton the previous week, with Liam Spink replacing the suspended Carl Palmer.

It was the home side who made a bright start to the game with Ahmed Obeng going close a couple of times early on.

The Pics kept up the pressure and James Dance was next to try his luck but his free kick was inches wide and then on 27 minutes Dele Adebola's fine curling left foot shot was headed off the line with keeper Shane Bland well beaten.

Attacking

Little had been seen of the visitors as an attacking force but Graeme Armstrong went close when he headed Mark Robinson's free kick just wide.

The second half saw the Pics on the attack, as they searched for the opening goal with Liam Spink and Josh Craddock both going close. Then in the 62nd minute the Whitby goal had an amazing escape.

A header from Christian Dacres hit the bar, Adebola headed the rebound back against the bar and Jack Duggan's header was cleared off the line.

This escape seemed to spur the visitors on as they suddenly took the game to their hosts.

With 15 minutes remaining the impressive Adam Rundle found the head of Armstrong whose downward header seemed destined for the bottom of the net until Pics keeper Chris Gemmell flung himself to his left to keep the ball out.

Craig Farrell was then introduced into the action and with his first kick almost put the Seasiders in front but his first time left foot volley flashed just past the post and then the home keeper was forced into two more fine saves as the visitors looked for a winner.

With time running out Duggan went close for the home side with a header which was saved and Obeng's late effort was blocked.

Despite the goalless scoreline this was an excellent advert for the Evo-Stik League Premier Division with both sides playing their part in a very entertaining game

Rushall Olympic: Gemmell, Turner, Martin, Duggan, Caines, Craddock (Spencer 79), Spink, Dacres, Adebola, Obeng, Dance.

Unused subs: Daniel, Wood, Mugiahs, Bannister

Whitby Town: Bland, Hassan, Robinson, Bullock, Pell, McTiernan (Henry 72), Portas, Mason, Armstrong, Snaith (Farrell 76), Rundle.

Unused subs: Mulligan, Burgess, Campbell.

Dele Adebola's shot is headed off the line as the Pics look to score against Whitby Town

Olympic's Chris Gemmell makes a terrific save to keep out Graeme Amstrong's header

Daniel breezes through to national stages

James Beech from Pleck in Red versus Declan Milward from Wednesbury

DANIEL BREEZE is already through to the national stages of the England Youth Championships after coming through the first regional round at the weekend, ***writes Craig Birch***.

The Walsall Wood fighter was crowned West Midlands champion and, with no opponent to box in the next phase, will take the Midlands title through a bye.

Competing at 69kg in Class B, for fighters for born in 1996, Breeze comfortably saw off Jake Birch, from Redditch Community, unanimously on Saturday.

A busy two days of action hosted by Donnington at the district's Sports & Social Club started at 56kg in Class A, for boxers born in 1997, contested under new rules.

James Beech, from Pleck, was the biggest winner at 56kg as he made the West Midlands final, which will be staged at the Lea Hall Social Club in Birmingham on Sunday.

He put out Wednesbury's Declan Millward by unanimous points decision, returning to the venue on Sunday to defeat George Vernon by the same verdict.

Vernon, from Richie Carter's Golden Gloves in Wolverhampton, had withstood a late fightback from Wellington's Colby Robson to take Saturday's bout on a split decision.

Wednesbury's Kyle Shirley is still in the mix at 64kg with Lewis O'Brian, from Triumph in Coventry and Small Heath's Connor Benson, who beat Eastside's Shazad Ali by majority. At 69kg, reigning National Ambition champion Benjamin Whittaker, from Wodensborough, saw off local rival Zohaib Hanif, of Pleck, by unanimous points call.

Marvin Campbell, from Bartley Green in Birmingham, will meet Whittaker on home turf this weekend after a unanimous victory over Solihull's George Reynolds. In Class B, there was another West Midlands and Midlands title at 48kg without boxing through Faluk Hussain, from Windmill in Smethwick.

Connor Jones, from Lions ABC in Dudley, progressed at 56kg. The former junior ABA champion beat Pleck's Haran Bains unanimously.

There were all byes at 60kg with Lee Gunter, from Right Stuff in Stafford, in the same bracket as Wellington's Dylan Brassington and Birmingham Irish's James Phipps. Walsall Wood's Shaun Cooper defeated Warley's Reece Roberts.

Club jinx strikes as Roberts loses call

GREAT Wyrley ABC's jinx in National Championships struck again as 17 year old Reece Roberts dropped a desperately close decision to Walsall Wood ABC boxer Shaun Cooper in the Light-Welterweight Final.

Over the new format of three, three minute rounds, Roberts proved once again that better things are just around the corner as he pushed his more experienced opponent all the way to the wire and may have been a shade unfortunate not to get the decision.

Cooper made the faster start throwing lots of punches in the first round which may have caught the judge's eye but Roberts took a lot on the gloves.

Cooper also had a good first minute of the second round but then Roberts at last started targeting the body, and with short hooks to head and body at last started to get into the bout.

A good body punch in the last round from Roberts seemed to drop Cooper, but it was ruled low, and with Cooper tiring by the second Roberts used his superior fitness to seemingly take over.

In such a close and absorbing contest, the Unanimous decision to Cooper was a bit puzzling but maybe Roberts paid for his slow start, and no doubt will have learned from this experience.

Coach Pete Hickenbottom, "After all the hard work Reece put in over Christmas, you'd got to feel for him."

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Lichfield and Walsall District Football League

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League One

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League Two

Ros Park 0 Trident 1

League Three

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League Four

Cellar Door 3 Bowman FC 4

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Round Three

Freemans 4 Eximius Warriors 0

Glen Skett Cup

Round One

Green Rock Tavern 5; Trent Valley Rovers 2

Rikkis Harrions Trophies

Round One

Oak Park Rangers 1 Queens FC 0

All other games postponed due to weather.

Khalsa cup run is ended

Staffordshire FA Vase

Quarter Final

Sporting Khalsa 2

Lichfield City 4

SPORTING Khalsa's Staffordshire FA Vase Cup campaign has ended.

Khalsa were down to 10 men as Kisiel Mariusz was sent off and Holt scored from the penalty spot to put Lichfield ahead.

Straight from the kick-off Jason Wood again passed back to the keeper which was intercepted by Holt and he slotted the ball home to make it two nil to Lichfield.

Liam Hughes scored in the 22nd minute and equalised for Khalsa in the 35th minute. Lichfield then scored twice more.

SPORT

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Young boxer is into nationals
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Run ruined
Pics win streak ends with draw
Page 43

Sports Desk 01902 319531 e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Return to winning ways for Walsall

Kenilworth 20 Walsall 41

WALSALL RFC got back to winning ways with a fine bonus point win at Kenilworth.

Within the first five minutes inspirational skipper Steve Halbert forced the turnover that led to Harvey Wootton sprinting 40 metres to open the scoring. Roger Weston added the conversion.

Kenilworth came straight back with a penalty of their own but in the 13th minute Walsall's good back play and an incisive change of direction saw Jack Crowhurst cross for an unconverted try.

Crowhurst then gained his second try which was converted by Matt Wood.

Kenilworth then started a mini-revival which resulted in two unconverted tries.

The second-half would see Walsall even more dominant Neil Pittaway and Mike Benson working tirelessly and a series of close attacking scrums saw Jamie Hickman score.

More Walsall pressure at the lineout drew a penalty which Matt Wood kicked with ease.

Dan Simpson then won the ball and attacked the blind-side where he found Crowhurst who chipped infield to the sprinting Matt Wood to score. Wood also added the conversion.

The final try of the game involved the three players but Wood got the try.

Wolves get it together

Wolves 2 Preston NE 0

IT'S taken a little longer than he may have hoped but Kenny Jackett finally got it all on Saturday – the performance, the goals, the win.

Preston North End never quite came to the boil and took only their second defeat in 17 games on the chin but the manner in which Jackett's team exerted a measure of authority over opponents of such high momentum added to the head coach's satisfaction.

And it would be unfair to go any further without mentioning the excellent performance of David Edwards.

He had already had one effort, clipped over the advancing Declan Rudd, cleared off the line before an identikit move saw the ball sit up nicely for a 28th-minute finish.The second goal has been a recurring problem for Jackett's team but not for Lee Evans on this occasion.

Forwards will come through, says Sawyers

Romaine Sawyers

Football

ROMAINE SAWYERS says Walsall's forwards will find the consistency needed to help fire a play-off push.

Saturday's 1-1 draw at Tranmere again threw the spotlight on the Saddlers' frequent inability to turn possession into goals and they remain the lowest scorers in the League One top half.

It also reignited questions over whether manager Dean Smith needs to sign a proven scorer during the January transfer window.

But speaking ahead of the game with Oldham Athletic, Sawyers insisted the lack of goals is not playing on the minds of the club's attacking players and backed the unit to come good. "It doesn't bother us," he said when asked about the lack of goals. "As long as we keep getting in the positions I'm sure they will turn to goals soon.

"In other games we have not had as many chances as we had at Tranmere and scored more.

"You can't always get it right. Sometimes it will go for you, on Saturday it didn't but on other days we can go and score four or five.

"We have always got confidence in the group. We will keep pushing."

Victory tonight would move the Saddlers into the top six for the first time since October and continue their impressive recent home form.

Smith's men have won four of their last five at the Banks's after being blighted by inconsistency at home during the opening months of the campaign, when they won just one in six in front of their own fans.

Sawyers says the players always believed they could turn things around.

"We were always confident," he said. "You could see it in the performance from the start of the season, there has always been the consistency at home.

"At the start of the season, things weren't quite falling for us but now what we have been doing on the training pitch is starting to pay off. Our team performance at the moment shows we are a very good side. People know what we are capable of and we just need that consistency."

SADDLERS FAIL TO HOLD ON TO LEAD

Tranmere 1 Walsall 1

ON a day when Walsall looked like taking a step forward, all-too familiar failings meant they stayed put.

For a long time on Saturday, Milan Lalkovic's superb 18th-minute strike had the Saddlers jumping into the League One play-off positions as they controlled proceedings at Prenton Park.

But they failed to capitalise on their dominance, the lead stayed slender and with 12 minutes remaining, substitute Cole Stockton rescued a point for Tranmere and Dean Smith's side stayed seventh.

Of course, breaking into the top six at this stage would have meant little in real terms.

Yet if Smith's men are on the outside looking in when the final whistle of the campaign blows, it will be because there have simply been too many games like this.

Charmingly

If you weren't among the 440 in the charmingly-named Cowshed End on Saturday then you might already have seen this performance anyway at Colchester, MK Dons, Gillingham or indeed elsewhere.

Granted, every team in the league will have dropped points they shouldn't at some stage this season.

But the list of games the Saddlers would have won had they been able to turn possession into goals is now beyond infuriating length.

The manager and players may be sick of hearing it but the lack of firepower, cutting edge, ruthlessness – call it

Football

what you will – is the one thing holding them back from being serious automatic promotion contenders in this league.

Everything else is in place. Smith hasn't exactly talked up a desire to bring in a striker but surely he must now be tempted to spice things up with the Saddlers so agonisingly close to cracking it.

There is the nagging feeling that without fresh blood the season could follow the pattern of Saturday's game.

Sawyers was guilty of dawdling when put clean through within the first 10 minutes, allowing defender Stephen Arthurworrey to close and block his shot.

It was a moment quickly forgotten when Lalkovic put the Saddlers ahead.

Fon Williams denied Westcarr a minute later in what proved to be a crucial save, while Sawyers and Ashley Hemmings also had efforts off target.

Richard O'Donnell in the visiting goal wasn't tested until Tranmere top scorer Ryan Lowe forced him into a low stop. He had little else to do before picking the ball out of the net, after Stockton was allowed too much time.

Saddlers' Sam Mantom weaves his way through under Tranmere pressure during the away clash

Heart is at home – Smith

DEAN SMITH targeted home comforts to help Walsall quickly forget their Tranmere frustrations.

The Saddlers missed the chance to jump into the League One top six when they were held to a 1-1 draw at Prenton Park on Saturday, having failed to make the most of a dominant first-half display.

Smith's side have won four of their last five games at home and the manager believes the Tranmere result could soon be seen in a different light, if they can continue that form.

"We have two tough games against Oldham and Brentford now but if we can get maximum points out of them, all of a sudden the draw at Tranmere will look a good point," he said.

"We will look forward to both games. They are both at home and if we can go and get as many points as we can, we can then see where we are at.

"We have picked up momentum at home recently, the supporters have been getting behind us and hopefully they will do again for what will be two very tough games."

Milan Lalkovic's superb 18th-minute opener appeared to have set the Saddlers on their way to three points at Tranmere.

But they ultimately paid for their failure to kill the home side off during the opening half and had to settle for a point after substitute Cole Stockton levelled 12 minutes from time.

The result reopened the debate over a lack of firepower at crucial times.

While Smith again queried claims his team need a genuine goalscorer, he did reaffirm the club are working to bring in new faces.

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